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OPINION METER

This week's poll:
Should NMC revisit its policy of allowing the termination of NMC employees without cause?

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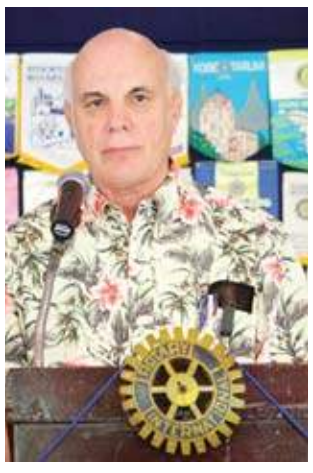
INSIDE



Advance Parole
The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services issues advance parole procedures for the CNMI.

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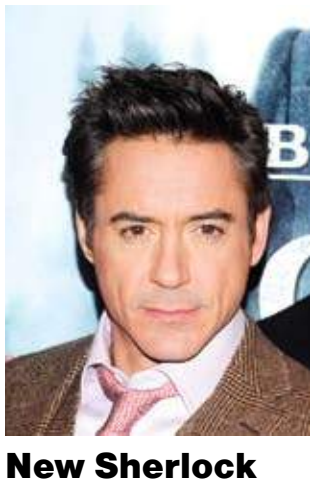

New Sherlock
Robert Downey Jr. is an actor at the top of his game—already a big-screen superhero, now an iconic super-sleuth.

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Obama delays minimum wage hike

$1.35 million for seven CNMI projects approved

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

President Barack Obama signed on Wednesday an omnibus Fiscal Year 2010 spending measure that also delays the minimum wage increase in the CNMI and American Samoa from May 2010 to Sept. 30, 2010 and every year thereafter—a development hailed by Gov. Benigno R. Fitial and the Saipan Chamber of Commerce yesterday.

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Joshua Generation Academy tops Christmas tree decoration contest

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The 37-member Joshua Generation International Academy team romped off with the $5,000 grand prize Thursday night after winning the 4th Annual Christmas Tree Decorating contest at the Paseo de Marianas.

Joshua Generation Academy bested 13 other participating groups from private and public schools.

Academy principal Lilian Handayan disclosed that the students spent some three weeks preparing for the contest, using 42 different kinds of recycled materials for their entry. Among these materials were tin cans, empty bottled water, Styrofoam, plastic cans, and plastic bags.

It was the second time for the school to participate in the decorating contest.

Handayan said the prize will greatly help their goal of repairing

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'$11.5M in projected over-expenditure in 3 months'

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial's special assistant for administration Esther Fleming told lawmakers yesterday that the government projects to overshoot its budget in the first three months of Fiscal Year 2010 by $11.5 million.

Fleming initially told members of the joint conference committee on the FY 2010 budget bill that the projected over-expenditure is $12 million from Oct. 1, 2009 to Dec. 31, 2009.

But Fleming later told *Saipan Tribune* in an interview that the projected amount is $11.5 million, but that she only rounded off the figure to $12 million.

If the quarterly trend continues, the over-expenditure may reach $46

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CAPITAL HILL MASCOT HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

George Castro of the Department of Public Works' Roads and Grounds Division cuts the tall grasses near a tree trunk dressed as Santa Claus along the road leading to and from Capital Hill yesterday. DPW says the tree trunk, which is being designed by a "white American guy," has become a Capital Hill landmark for its changing character depending on the time of the year. For example, it dons a stars-and-stripes hat around the Fourth of July, a leprechaun hat during Halloween, or a toga during graduation months.

Survey: Alcohol, drugs top causes of domestic violence. **PAGE 2**
King admits regents divided on issues at NMC. **PAGE 3**

Local

Survey: Alcohol, drugs top causes of domestic violence

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

A survey completed by students of Northern Marianas College has shown that alcohol and drugs are believed to be the top causes of domestic violence incidents in the CNMI and that majority of these cases are not reported to police.

Culled from the opinions and views of over 200 respondents, the study—conducted under the Current Issues class of Sam McPhetres—showed that 91 respondents are convinced that alcohol is the biggest factor why domestic violence happens, while 45 believe that illegal drugs are to blame.

A significant number, 44 respondents, also identified financial issues as the third primary cause, while 18 cited poker as among the factors.

There were 180 respondents who admitted knowing someone who has suffered from domestic violence while only 64 said they hear about it.

Domestic violence can take different forms with one goal: wanting to control one's domestic partner through fear by regularly abusing them physically, sexually, psychologically, or economically. A great majority of survey participants, 243, are confident that they know what domestic violence is while only 15 are not fully aware of it.

The survey had 90 male participants and 150 female participants. One hundred forty are high school graduates; 50 completed associate degrees; 30 finished bachelor degrees; 5 are doctorates; and 10 did not specify their educational attainment.

Separate research conducted by the students showed that 85 percent of domestic violence victims in the CNMI are women between 20-24 years of age, who are most often victimized by someone they know. Most of these cases, the researchers said, are never reported to the police.

Researchers found that only 18 domestic violence cases were reported from January 2009 to date. These cases occurred in January, with 3 cases; March, 2; June, 2; July, 2; August, 4; October, 2; and November, 3 cases.

Ex-convict gets 3 years for robbery, assault

The Superior Court has imposed a three-year prison sentence on an ex-convict who robbed a woman and assaulted a man in separate incidents.

Presiding Judge Robert Naraja sentenced Jeffrey Indalecio Celis to two years in prison for robbery, and one year for assault and battery.

Naraja said Celis shall serve the sentences concurrent with the prison term the federal court imposed on him. This means that Celis will serve the prison term within the sentence the federal court had imposed on him for violating the terms of his probation.

The federal court earlier revoked Celis' probation and sentenced him to two years in prison.

Naraja gave Celis credit for the time he had already served in prison.

The judge required him to pay a $125 court assessment fee and restitution, if any, to the victims.

The Office of the Attorney General charged Celis with assault with a dangerous weapon. In the second case, the OAG charged him with robbery, theft, criminal trespass, and contempt.

Celis signed a plea agreement with the government, pleading guilty to assault and battery in the amended complaint. He pleaded guilty to robbery in the second case.

According to the plea agreement, on Aug. 15, 2009 Celis assaulted Carlos Marcelino.

On Oct. 1, 2009, Celis forcibly took the property of Hun Myu Ha.

In September 1999, the federal court sentenced Celis to 120 months in prison and placed him on three years of supervised release for the offense of felon in possession of a firearm.

On Aug. 5, 2009, Celis allegedly attacked Marcelino with a large knife in

See EX-CONVICT on Page 4

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King admits regents divided on issues at NMC

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

A member of the Northern Marianas College Board of Regents, Janet King, admitted yesterday that board members are split on the issues going on at the college but she is confident they will remain focused on the goal to serve students first.

King

"The regents are admittedly splintering on the issue of how to deal with the recent matters at hand. In my opinion, we should work with the president. If it is our policies that are not working, we will work on that," she told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday.

NMC president Dr. Carmen Fernandez's management style has lately gotten some flak at the college, especially the college's hiring and firing policies, which have resulted in a large number of long-time employees leaving the college. The latest was the nonrenewal of long-time instructor Sam McPhetres early this month.

If the president's leadership in carrying out NMC's mission and goals is the issue, the board will need to address it, King said.

As regents, she said, it is their duty to look into the effectiveness of—but not participate in—the president's leadership and her ability to provide quality service to the students and community.

"It is precisely our role to do so. That is not micromanaging," she said, adding that when they meet with the president, they will work together to find what is best for the college.

"I am confident the regents are all cohesive on that point. We all understand that it's students first," she added.

Cease order

King also admitted receiving an order from Fernandez about making comments to the media about NMC and board issues.

"I am presently ordered specifically by the president to 'cease' making comments to the media, because my comments 'undermine' the office of the president, the Board of Regents, and the college community," she said.

King pointed out, though, that as one of the college's regents, any statements she makes "are clearly my own."

Saipan Tribune learned that the NMC board, with the confirmation of new members, is expected to meet before end of this month.

Last Dec. 3, Gov. Benigno R. Fitial re-appointed Maria Malua Peter and former chairman Charles V. Cepeda to the board. Peter was confirmed by the Senate while Cepeda is still in the process of completing all the requirements.

Other board members are Paz Younis, Frank Rabauliman, Elaine Orilla, and Andrew Orsini.

DPH hires 6 new doctors

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Six new doctors will soon be joining the medical staff at the Commonwealth Health Center early next year, according to Public Health Secretary Kevin Joseph Villagomez.

Most of the six physicians will come from the U.S. mainland, he said.

Three will be for internal medicine, two for pediatrics, and one for the emergency room.

"We're now in the process of bringing all these physicians from the States, hopefully early next year," he said.

At the moment, the islands' lone hospital has 26 full-time doctors and five who are working part-time.

Villagomez is confident the infusion of additional doctors would help improve the services available at the hospital.

"Our hospital will be OK with 32 physicians," he told *Saipan Tribune*.

The Department of Public Health is budgeted for 43 doctors under its current budget.

Villagomez said the department's collaboration with private clinics has greatly helped CHC in providing health care services to the community.

The federal takeover of the local immigration system on Nov. 28 had earlier caused worries that it may impact the hiring of personnel for the hospital. DPH is the largest government agency in terms of hiring nonresident workers, now estimated at over 200. Most are either nurses or doctors.

However, Villagomez pointed out that federalization also provides CHC a "window of opportunity" to get physicians outside of the Commonwealth using the J1 class visa. This type of visa is being availed of in Washington State and Colorado, which have both benefited from the process.

"There's also a window of opportunity for us because we can avail of a J1 visa for our health professionals," Villagomez said, adding that a J1 visa allows medical professionals outside the CNMI to work under this visa classification. These physicians are U.S.-trained and U.S. licensed but can't work in the U.S. because of their visa status.

Villagomez said this opportunity will help these professionals come to the CNMI without the "excessive costs."

Villagomez said they are now communicating with Washington and Colorado to see how the CNMI can avail of the same process.

He emphasized that the situation at CHC is not an isolated case.

"The U.S. has a shortage of physicians because a lot of the physicians now are going into specialized care and the result is not enough number for general doctors," he said, adding that other states are also exploring the idea of building their local workforce by creating scholarship programs to lure students to medical professions.

This approach, Villagomez said, could be applied here in the CNMI.

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Senate passes bill strengthening anti-child abuse law

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

On an 8-0 vote, the Senate passed on Thursday a bill strengthening an anti-child abuse law, including criminalizing actions that intentionally interfere with the reporting of child abuse in addition to the criminal acts of failing to report child abuse.

House Bill 16-269, introduced by Rep. Rosemond Santos (R-Saipan), now heads to Gov. Benigno R. Fitial for action.

The bill seeks to revise the Child Abuse Act of 2009 and repeal 6 CMC § 5311,5316 and 6 CMC §5321-5325 of the CNMI Criminal Code.

Eight senators present during Thursday's session voted "yes" on the bill. Only Sen. Joseph M. Mendiola (Cov-Tinian) was absent among the nine senators.

H.B. 16-269 provides for the protection of minors and the prosecution of persons who are charged or convicted of child abuse by clarifying the definition of "child abuse" and specifying the duties of certain persons to report instances of child abuse.

It revises the definition of "child abuse" to remove antiquated crimes such as "molestation," and to include the modern scheme of varying degree of "sexual abuse of a minor."

A child abuse refers to willful and intentional striking, beating, infliction of physical pain, injury or mental distress on a child under 18 years old, or failure to provide that child adequate supervision, medical care, food, clothing or shelter.

A person convicted of child abuse may be punished by imprisonment for not more than five years, a fine of not more than $2,000, or both. However, the court may, upon conviction, order that the person be provided with appropriate counseling to cure, alleviate or prevent psychological problems that are judged to be related to the child abuse incident.

The definition of child abuse also now includes not only actions taken against children in a person's "custody," but also actions taken against children be persons who occupy a "position of authority" over the child.

As used in the bill, "position of authority" means an employer, youth leader, scout leader, coach, teacher, counselor, school administrator, religious leader, doctor, nurse, psychologist, guardian, babysitter, or a substantially similar position, and a police officer or probation officer other than when the officer is exercising custodial control over a minor.

The bill also criminalizes any actions taken to interfere with the mandatory or voluntary reporting of cases of child abuse in addition to the criminal acts or failing to make a mandatory report. It also imposes pretrial release considerations in cases of child abuse that prohibit release from custody absent a determination by a judge.

Chief Criminal Prosecutor George Hasselback, who had helped draft the bill, testified in support of the legislation during a session of the House of Representatives on Dec. 4, and answered questions from the members.

The bill unanimously passed the House with all 13 members present on Dec. 4, and later passed the Senate on Dec. 17.

Other bills passed

In its Thursday session, the Senate also passed on an 8-0 vote H.B. 16-254, HD1 to include on the NMI Retirement Fund Board of Trustees a member from a chartered or incorporated organization representing CNMI retirees.

Senators also passed H.B. 16-202, HD1, which seeks to establish a special account to ensure that adequate funding is readily available for the operational, inter-island travel, and training expenses of the Inspection and Investigation Section of the Fire Division.

EX-CONVICT

From Page 2

Koblerville. He was arrested, but he later posted bail.

The U.S. government moved to revoke the supervised release of Celis after the U.S. Probation found him violating some conditions, including continued use of methamphetamine or "ice" and marijuana.

The U.S. Probation also found that Celis allegedly slapped an inmate at the Department of Corrections on Oct. 10. Celis allegedly got mad when the detainee interrupted his conversation with a DOC officer.

The Superior Court last October issued an arrest warrant for Celis, who was accused of robbing Ha at the Prince Hotel in Sadog Tasi. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

JOSHUA

From Page 1

the school's cafeteria and other immediate supplies of the students.

Besides the joy of sharing the students' talents and creativity, Handayan believes the event also fosters the spirit of cooperation, support, and teamwork among students.

Saipan Tribune learned that the first prize winner was just three points ahead of the second best team, Saipan Community School, which got 252 points and went home with $3,000 cash prize, donated by RNV Construction Inc. The $5,000 first prize was courtesy of Country House Restaurant.

Adjudged third best was Oleai Elementary School's entry, which bagged the $2,000 cash prize, donated by Kinpachi Restaurant. Oleai garnered 348 points.

Schools that managed to get into the "Lucky Seven List" and were awarded $1,000 each included San Vicente Elementary School, San Antonio Elementary School, Kagman Elementary School, Koblerville Elementary School, Tanapag Elementary School, Grace Christian Academy, and William Reyes Elementary School.

Five hundred dollar consolation prizes were also awarded each to Dandan Elementary School, Garapan Elementary School, Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School, and Ladera International School of Saipan.

The competition judges included first lady Josie Fitial, Remy Buniag, David Rosario, Frank Tudela, Marianne Teregeyo, Angelo Villagomez, James Nelson, and Ruel Villacrusis.

According to the event's organizer, Sonia Siwa of PDM Promoters Inc., cash prizes were donated by Kinpachi Restaurant, Country House Restauran, RNV Construction Inc., Furusato Restaurant, Hafadai Productions, Misa Enterprises Inc. and Misako Kamata.

Manglona, San Nicolas top drawing contest

PDM Promoters Inc. also named the winners in the "3rd My Holiday Greetings to Our Visitors" drawing contest that was held among students of Tinian and Rota schools.

In Sinapalo Elementary School alone, PDM Promoters received 88 entries. The winners were Theora A. Manglona, first place; Edward Ayuyu, second place; and Jana Mendiola, third place.

On Tinian, 60 students participated in the drawing contest that was eventually won by Mikaela San Nicolas, Hye Rin Kim, and Dena San Nicolas.

All six student winners were awarded cash prizes, while all participants will receive a study kit from PDM Promoters Inc.

$11.5M

From Page 1

million at the end of FY 2010.

"The bulk of this is medical referrals and hemodialysis expenses because we don't have a nephrologists on island and we have seen an increase in off-island medical referrals," Fleming told the joint conference committee led by Rep. Ray N. Yumul (R-Saipan) and Sen. Paul A. Manglona (R-Rota).

The committee met for the first time yesterday after a budget deadlock between the House and the Senate, but the committee later dissolved itself, leaving the passage of the FY 2010 budget to the 17th Legislature in January 2010.

Fleming said the bulk of the $11.5 million in projected over-expenditure is for the Commonwealth Health Center, totaling close to $6 million.

Of the almost $6 million in over-expenditure, $3.6 million is because of hemodialysis expenses, some $2 million for medical referrals, and the rest are for other operational and personnel expenses at CHC.

"Close to $3.3 million is over-expenditure at CUC, and the rest, for other executive branch departments. As I said earlier, a lot of the expenditures are for hospital and CUC expenses," Fleming added.

Sen. Frica Pangelinan (D-Saipan), during the conference committee meeting, said what Fleming earlier termed as $12 million in "deficit" could be more appropriately called "unauthorized over-expenditure."

The House budget bill identified budgetary resources of $162.820 million, which the Senate agreed on. But while the House bill pegs the appropriations at $150,288,886, the Senate amended it to $154,418,886 and included austerity measures like a 16-hour cut in government work hours per pay period to help reduce the projected deficit of $15.3 million in FY 2010.

Because of a lack of a timely passed FY 2010 budget, the government has been operating under a continuing budget resolution since Oct. 1.

OBAMA

From Page 1

Among other things, the delay will give the U.S. Congress time to review the results of a U.S. Government Accountability Office study on the minimum wage hike's impact on the CNMI and American Samoa economies.

GAO, the investigative arm of the U.S. Congress, is required to issue the report by Spring 2010.

H.R. 3288 provides $447 billion in FY 2010 appropriations for the U.S. departments of Commerce, Defense, Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Justice, Labor, State, Transportation, the Treasury, and Veterans Affairs, and other agencies. It also contains an average 2 percent wage increase for federal employees.

Obama's signing of H.R. 3288, which succeeds a funding resolution that expires Friday, also includes approval of $1.35 million in seven CNMI special projects funding requested by Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP).

They include the $200,000 earmarked for the Garapan public market, which former Republican presidential candidate John McCain earlier described as "awful."

Sablan said this is the first time that congressionally requested earmarks have been available to the CNMI, one of the benefits of having representation in the U.S. House of Representatives.

"I am very glad that I have been able to use the office of the people of the Northern Mariana Islands to obtain funding for projects and organizations that otherwise might not have the money they need," Sablan said in a statement.

50-cent hike

Page 1,081 of the 1,516-page conference report that accompanies H.R. 3288 contains the provision on the CNMI and American Samoa's minimum wage.

"The conference agreement includes a general provision proposed by the Senate that delays until September 30, 2010, and until September 30 of each year thereafter, scheduled minimum wage increases in American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The House did not include a similar provision," it reads.

Acting press secretary Teresa Kim said Fitial "welcomes" Obama's support for the delay in the implementation of the CNMI's minimum wage increase "based on objective and informed economic studies to properly guide federal wage policy on the islands."

Fitial said this policy is also embraced by American Samoa Delegate Eni Faleomavaega.

"This also brings some economic relief, especially considering the challenges of federalization and the economic downturn," the governor told *Saipan Tribune* when asked for comment.

The CNMI's current minimum wage is $4.55 an hour, after another 50-cent increase last May 26.

The next round of 50-cent increase in minimum wage is set for May 2010.

However, Obama's signing of the omnibus FY 2010 spending bill on Dec. 16 pushed back the implementation of the next wage hike by four months—from May 2010 to Sept. 30, 2010, and until Sept. 30 of every year.

Jim Arenovski, president of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce, said the business organization feels that the delay will allow more time to review the GAO study to see if the yearly increase and the amount are appropriate in the fragile economy.

The Chamber, the largest group of businesses in the CNMI, made it clear in the past that the study should have been completed and reviewed to best evaluate the effects on the local economy before implementation of any minimum wage increase.

"It is important to note that with the almost universal reduction in sales volume across all industries, further increases to business costs, including minimum wage, are mostly passed on to the consumer," Arenovski said when asked for comment.

He said while most employers want to be able to pay their workers more, to be able to attract the best people and retain the best staff, they can't afford to do this at the detriment of placing their business at risk or going out of business. He said this is especially true in a unique business climate where businesses have already cut costs to the bone and have "right sized" their business to try to survive in these times.

"Thus any increase in costs to business is most likely passed on to the customer in product pricing," added Arenovski, who is also the president of Delta Management.

7 projects

H.R. 3288 includes $1.35 million in special projects for the CNMI that Sablan requested. A common theme to most of the projects funded at the delegate's request is education.

"I truly believe that our economic success—our health as a community—30, 40, 50 years ahead depends on educating ourselves now. That's where I put my efforts for this special funding, and education will continue to be one of my top legislative priorities in Congress," he said.

Sablan thanked Appropriations Committee chair David Obey (D-WI) and Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD) for their assistance in obtaining the extra funding for the CNMI.

The seven projects for which Sablan obtained funding are:

- Refaluwasch and Chamorro language programs for the Public School System, $250,000;
- Northern Marianas Trade Institute for vocational and technical training, $200,000;
- Design and construction of the Garapan Public Market, $200,000;
- Micronesian Legal Services's Rota and Tinian outreach, $180,000;
- Roof repairs for the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library, $200,000;
- Division of Fish and Wildlife's educational programs on marine sanctuaries, $220,000.
- Public School System's purchase of library books and educational materials, $100,000.

Sablan has also begun soliciting requests for Fiscal Year 2011 appropriations. He said letters are going out to some 50 government agencies and non-profit organizations, setting out the guidelines and the timeline for making requests.

NEWS BRIEFS

NMC to hosts free information session

Those interested in furthering their education and advancing their professional careers are encouraged to attend the Northern Marianas College's free information session on Monday, Dec. 28, 2009, at Room D-1 at the College's As Terlaje campus, from 5:30pm to 7pm.

Faculty, staff, and students from the different degree and certificate programs, as well as counseling, financial aid, and admissions staff will be on hand to answer questions. Other current students will also be speaking about their experiences at NMC.

Individuals who attend the free information session will qualify to have their application fee and their placement test fees waived for the Spring and Summer 2010 semesters. This represents a savings of about $75 for either semester. Participants will also receive personal assistance in filling up application forms and financial aid documents.

NMC offers several degree and certificate programs, including a bachelor of science degree in elementary education, associate degrees in business, liberal arts, nursing, natural resource management, criminal justice, hospitality management, and more. Moreover, it offers short-term certificate programs in different vocational, academic, and professional areas.

The free information session is open to everyone, including graduating seniors and their parents, government and private sector employees, international students, and members of the general public who are interested in learning more about the programs at NMC. ***(NMC)***

Netcare terminates contract with Fund

Netcare Life and Health Insurance Company announced yesterday that it has terminated its Group Life Insurance contract with the NMI Retirement Fund effective Dec. 15, 2009.

The termination of the Group Life Insurance contract only affected the group Basic Life Insurance and Dependent coverages. All personal life insurance (i.e., Universal Term Life insurance, Cancer Policy) under Netcare Life and Health Insurance Company and supplemental plans (i.e., Personal Accident Plan) under Moylan's Insurance remain active and unaffected by the termination.

Netcare and NMIRF were unable to resolve numerous issues that arose under the contract, the resolution of which was required in order for Netcare to continue servicing CNMI Employees and Retirees.

"While the termination of the Group Life Insurance contract is unfortunate, Netcare Life and Health Insurance Company continues to look forward to new opportunities of working with the employees and retirees of the CNMI government to service their needs with other valuable insurance programs," said Bobby A. Shringi, manager, Life Department, Moylan's Insurance Underwriters General Agents for Netcare Life and Health Insurance. ***(PR)***

Air Force to conduct live-fire, laser training on FDM

SANTA RITA, Guam—The U.S. Air Force will conduct live-fire and laser training exercises on the island of Farallon de Medinilla on Dec. 21, from 8am to 9pm.

The general location of this activity will be on the island of Farallon de Medinilla training area on a 10 nautical mile radius on all quadrants. The public—especially fisherman, commercial pilots and marine tour operators—are advised to stay clear from this area during the times and dates indicated.

Farallon de Medinilla plays a special and unique role in national defense because its location provides access frequency that supports established training requirements. In addition, the air and sea space in the Farallon provides sufficient room for the many different attack profiles necessary to replicate training opportunities in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. ***(PR)***

Eco Camp returns with Christmas Camp

Eco Camp is back for its 10th year and will start sessions on Monday, Dec. 21. Located at the Mariana Resort and Spa, Eco Camp will feature activities including go karts, kayaking, golf, tennis, snorkeling, arts and crafts, dance class, swimming, soccer, and more.

Camp facilities include 3 swimming pools, a snorkeling beach, dive pool, golf course, go kart track, arts and crafts room, buffet lunch, baseball and soccer field, and more.

Christmas Camp runs Monday through Thursday in weekly sessions over the Christmas break. Camp hours are 9am to 3pm.

Applications are available on-line at www.marianastrekking.com and Marianas Trekking. For more information call Marianas Trekking at 323-8735. ***(PR)***

End of Year Special

December 21 - 25, 28-30 (8 days)

10:30 - 12:00	ESL Writing Course
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SCHOOL VACCINATION SCHEDULE

December 11th - Friday
Chacha Jr. High School
Hopwood Jr. High School
Tinian Elementary School

December 14th - Monday
Grace Christian Academy
Mount Carmel School
Saipan International School

December 15th - Tuesday
Calvary Christian Academy
Ladera International School
Marianas Baptist Academy
Rota Jr. High School
Saipan Community School

December 16th - Wednesday
Marianas High School
Rota High School

December 17th - Thursday
Kagman High School

December 18th - Friday
Saipan Southern High School

December 21st - Monday
Tinian Jr. & High Schools
(7th-9th Graders)

December 22nd - Tuesday
Tinian High School
(10th – 12th Graders)

December 23rd- Wednesday
St. Joseph School (Tinian)
Grace Christian Academy (Tinian)

Middle and High School students also need to turn in Screening Questionnaire with their signed Consent Forms

Parents can also bring their kids to any health clinic to get vaccinated.

For more information, contact the Department of Public Health at 234-8950 or email fluwatchcnmi@gmail.com.

CDC

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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EDITORIAL

Yegor Gaidar: Planting seeds of liberal democracy

Yegor Gaidar, who died Wednesday at the age of 53, was a Russian hero little appreciated by most of his compatriots. Many of them associate him with the miseries of the 1990s. History—if it is written honestly, always a question in Russia—will record him as a fearless, clear-eyed believer in liberal democracy who accepted an impossible challenge that most others shied away from.

When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, Russian President Boris Yeltsin assigned to Mr. Gaidar, then only 35 years old, the task of rescuing Russia's economy. Mr. Gaidar became associated with what Western economists called "shock therapy," but he always maintained that his reform program was the minimum that could begin to bring Russia out of the wreckage that communism had bequeathed. He freed prices, knowing that some people's meager savings would be wiped out, because there was no other way to get goods to market. He favored rapid privatization, knowing that the only people with capital to invest were, by Soviet definition, criminals, because he had faith that property-holders would begin to understand the importance of the rule of law. And he always defended his program with logic and honesty against enemies who bothered with neither.

His program brought less success than similar policies applied in Poland and other central and eastern European countries. He made mistakes, of course. But he also faced ferocious opposition from unrepentant communists and inconstant support from Mr. Yeltsin. Having spent a generation longer under communism, Russia had a deeper hole to dig out from. And while outposts of the Soviet empire could blame Russia for their unhappiness during the difficult transition to capitalism, Russians, having no such ready scapegoat, found it convenient to blame Mr. Gaidar.

It was always something of a surprise that Mr. Gaidar, scion of an illustrious Soviet family, came to feel so deeply the value of freedom, both political and economic. Certainly it was not an understanding shared by Mr. Yeltsin's successor, Vladimir Putin, who spurned Mr. Gaidar's humanism while embracing the nationalism and heavy-handed governance that Mr. Gaidar knew would take the country toward a dead end. Soaring oil prices during most of this decade allowed the Kremlin to set aside the remaining economic reforms Mr. Gaidar knew to be necessary. The health and welfare of the country declined, so much so that Mr. Gaidar's age of demise is close to average for Russian men.

Still, it would be wrong to label Mr. Gaidar a failure. The middle class he dreamed of has indeed emerged in Russia, and it enjoys a kind of personal freedom unknown in previous Russian history. Mr. Putin has given way to the third president of the modern era, Dmitry Medvedev, who talks of a "freer, more just, and more humane" political system. Whether he means what he says, or can bring about the change he describes if he does, is unclear. But the debate over Russia's future, in which Mr. Gaidar engaged so uncompromisingly, continues.

(c) 2009, The Washington Post

Obama doctrine emerges in Nobel speech

By DOYLE MCMANUS
(C) 2009, LOS ANGELES TIMES

The headlines on President Barack Obama accepting the Nobel Peace Prize last week focused on the apparent irony: A man who had just ordered 30,000 more troops into war was snagging a trophy as the world's leading champion of peace. Obama tackled the paradox head-on in his Oslo speech. "Evil does exist in the world," he said. "War is sometimes necessary."

But the president's speech was about much more than the regrettable necessity of war. It also contained the fullest exposition so far of Obama's evolving approach to global diplomacy, including his attempts at "engagement" with hostile regimes in places such as Iran, North Korea and Sudan—in other words, the emerging Obama doctrine.

"I know that engagement with repressive regimes lacks the satisfying purity of indignation," he said. "But I also know that ... no repressive regime can move down a new path unless it has the choice of an open door."

And when diplomacy fails, Obama said, the United States and other big powers must apply serious sanctions against rogue regimes—"alternatives to violence that are tough enough to actually change behavior."

There are two propositions there—engagement and sanctions—and neither has been proved to work yet. Turning them into practical action will be the test of whether the Obama doctrine works.

First, engagement. One of Obama's main foreign-policy promises in last year's presidential campaign was that, unlike George W. Bush, he wouldn't threaten hostile countries with regime change; he'd talk to them instead. In his first months, Obama opened more direct talks with Iran and North Korea over their nuclear arsenals and with Sudan and Myanmar over human rights.

At the same time, Obama downplayed public criticism of repressive governments whose help he needed on diplomatic issues. He ducked a meeting with the Dalai Lama to avoid offending China. He called Egypt's president for life, Hosni Mubarak, "a force for stability and good." He sent a special envoy to Sudan who tried to deal gently with a regime that has waged genocide in Darfur.

All that courtesy toward dictators alarmed human-rights activists, who worried that Obama was taking U.S. diplomacy back toward what they consider the amoral "realism" of Henry Kissinger and the Cold War.

"Engagement without pressure is read by authoritarian governments as capitulation," Human Rights Watch's executive director, Kenneth Roth, said in an interview. Jamie Rubin, a former State Department spokesman in the Clinton administration, wrote in a Newsweek column: "There was a time when presidents gained political strength from upholding democratic values."

The Obama administration's response boils down to one word: patience. "This isn't a disagreement over values; it's a disagreement over means," an Obama aide told me. "Chest thumping hasn't made people's lives better at the end of the day. ... Give us some time."

But so far, engagement hasn't yielded much in the way of tangible results. And that's where sanctions come in under the Obama doctrine.

In Oslo, Obama said it was time "to insist that nations like Iran and North Korea do not game the system. Those who claim to respect international law cannot avert their eyes when those laws are flouted.

"When there is genocide in Darfur, systematic rape in Congo, repression in Burma, there must be consequences. Yes, there will be engagement; yes, there will be diplomacy; but there must be consequences when these things fail."

But this approach can't guarantee results either. The history of international sanctions lists more failures than successes. It's hard to design sanctions that can change a regime's behavior, hard to enlist other countries to participate, and hard to enforce the measures once they're in place.

To take three important cases Obama mentioned:

The United Nations has imposed tough sanctions on North Korea, but the regime there is already so isolated that it seems almost indifferent to the pressure.

The U.N. has imposed sanctions on Sudan, too, but China—which has nurtured a lucrative oil business relationship with the Sudanese—has blocked attempts to make them tougher. As a result, the Obama administration has explored a form of "reverse sanctions," offering undisclosed incentives if Sudan improves the human-rights situation in Darfur and implements a peace agreement in its southern region. So far, though, the approach has achieved little.

On Iran, Obama is about to mount a drive for what Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton once called "crippling sanctions" to punish Iran for producing enriched uranium that could be used for nuclear weapons. But diplomats warn that the road to imposing sanctions will be long and hard, and there's no guarantee that the measures will ever get close to crippling.

In two major foreign-policy speeches in the last two weeks, Obama has added more details to his evolving foreign-policy blueprint.

At West Point, he explained why he was escalating the war in Afghanistan, but he called it a unique case and said the United States didn't have the resources to use military force everywhere in the world.

At Oslo, he offered the rest of the world a bargain: The United States will engage diplomatically and act multilaterally, but it needs the help of others to make it work.

The test of the Obama doctrine—as its author says himself—will be whether it gets results.

McManus is a Times *columnist. He can be reached at doyle.mcmanus@latimes.com.*

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Spend or save, what's an American to do?

By STEVE LOPEZ
(c) 2009, Los Angeles Times

Lopez is a Times *columnist*.

LOS ANGELES—So here I am at the Beverly Center mall, looking at a pair of $228 jeans from Bloomingdale's, and I can't remember my duty as an American: Am I supposed to buy these overpriced trousers and everything else in sight to help fuel the economic recovery?

Or am I supposed to stifle the consumptive urge and sock away every spare nickel and dime because the national buying binge helped cause the crash and I could be out of work by Friday?

If you listen to politicians, analysts and pundits, you'll hear it both ways, along with a lot more conflicting and indecipherable gibberish.

Consumer confidence is up. Consumer spending is down.

The recovery is kicking into gear. We're headed for another cliff.

Real estate is coming back strong. The foreclosures have only just begun.

It can all be pretty confusing for a layperson like myself. So I asked economist Christopher Thornberg, who saw the housing meltdown coming long before most of his colleagues, to meet me at the mall and help clear things up.

You know what, though?

I don't need an economist to tell me that only a moron would pay $228 for a pair of jeans. I dropped them back on the pile faster than you can spell T-A-R-G-E-T.

And that's when I met up with Thornberg, founding director of Beacon Economics, a California-based research group that puts out a quarterly economic forecast.

Over a cup of coffee near Bloomingdale's, Thornberg assured me I'm not crazy to think I'm getting mixed signals on the economy. He also said I'm not likely to hear the truth from either Washington politicians or Wall Street barons.

And what exactly is the truth, at least as Thornberg sees it?

■ Wall Street is nearly as ruthless and unregulated as it was two years ago, thanks in part to everyone on President Barack Obama's economic team being of Wall Street, by Wall Street and for Wall Street.

■ Although Joe Blow's consumption is down a bit, his wages have been chopped, so as a percentage of income his spending is at an all-time high.

■ The trade deficit is still way out of whack, in part because of our spending habits, and the national debt is gargantuan. So if you're on the bubble, this holiday season probably isn't the best time to buy things you don't need with money you don't have.

"If you don't have the ability to pay off the credit card at the end of the month, you shouldn't use it," said Thornberg, chief economist for the California state controller and a former senior lecturer at the University of California, Los Angeles Anderson School of Management.

That sounds positively un-American, doesn't it? Particularly in December.

But Thornberg insisted that debt is something you should only take on for a long-term asset that you pay for over many years. A house, for instance. But you don't take on debt to buy iPods for the family, he said, or you're asking for big trouble, especially given the outrageous finance charges.

"In the '90s, American consumers spent like college freshmen with dad's credit card," Thornberg said. We've slowed down because we woke up in 2007 to discover the "$1 million house is worth only $500,000" and the equity line of credit had become a flesh-eating monster. But in his opinion, "Americans still have way too much debt."

It wouldn't be so galling, of course, if Wall Street wasn't handing out bonuses like this year was something to celebrate.

In case you missed it, the chief executive at Goldman Sachs, which got billions in taxpayer-funded bailouts and will give stock bonuses to 30 executives and pay its average employee $700,000, said his company is "doing God's work."

"The entire compensation system on Wall Street is `Heads I win, tails you lose,' " Thornberg told me. "They take a big share of the upside and no responsibility for the downside," he went on, and he was getting angrier as he spoke.

"When you see home prices triple in seven years, you've gotta know something's wrong. Think about the players in that. Ken Lewis of BofA, Angelo Mozilo of Countrywide and Robert Toll of Toll Brothers.

"All these guys made massive amounts of money, and they all sat around saying how wonderful everything was ... and when it blew up ... they walked away gazillionaires and took no responsibility. And Robert Toll had the unmitigated gall to go to Washington and say the construction industry needed to be bailed out without acknowledging he made an insane amount of money."

I hope all this doesn't ruin your holiday mood. I just thought we should know whether we can trust the people who are telling us to get out the credit card and buy, buy, buy, so we can run up huge finance charges and Wall Street bankers can continue doing God's work.

I will say, however, that I think American consumers are catching on to the scam. The Beverly Center wasn't exactly mobbed when I was there. It was late morning on a weekday, just a couple of weeks before Christmas, and some stores had more employees than shoppers.

"I think shoppers are being cautious, much to the chagrin of retailers," said Jack Kyser of the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation. When shoppers do show up, Kyser said, they're pretty "aggressive in demanding markdowns."

So if we're not flooding the malls, or buying cars and furniture, where's our money going?

As Thornberg explained, consumer spending includes big-ticket items like housing, education and health care. With the possible exception of housing, there aren't a lot of bargains to be found, so we're stretched pretty thin, with unemployment expected to stay high into next year and hundreds of thousand of foreclosures still to come, just in California.

Even Santa looked as if he were on the bubble. In the middle of the Beverly Center, he sat alone on a bench, waiting for some business. He told me he's been wearing the red hat and white beard for 13 years, and he's hearing something a bit different this year from the little rascals. They're asking for dolls and trucks instead of iPods and computers.

Santa said he gets the occasional adult sitting on his lap, and they've got problems too.

"They tell me they have no job and no money," he said.

Those are things Santa doesn't have in his sack, so what's he tell them?

"I tell them to have faith."

The danger of success

By MATTHEW DOWD
Special to The Washington Post

The writer, a political analyst for ABC News, was the chief strategist for George W. Bush's 2004 presidential campaign.

President Obama needs an exit strategy. I am not referring to Afghanistan or Iraq (though there are quite a few similarities between the situation Obama is in on health-care reform and the political difficulties President George W. Bush faced on Iraq). Congressional Democrats and Obama are headed toward a "catastrophic success" politically if they pass health-care reform in its current legislative form. And catastrophic success was a term then-President Bush used on Iraq when he acknowledged the great initial victory but didn't take into account the long-term calamity and costs.

I am not seeking to argue the substance of health care and the merits or demerits of the bills, and will leave that to experts in policy and its effects. I am talking about the politics of the legislation and the effect it is likely to have on Obama and Democrats in Congress.

Unlike many other pundits and political experts in both parties, I think that passage of a bill by the Democrats at this point will be politically damaging to both the president and congressional Democrats. Conversely, defeat of the legislation is much more likely to hurt Republicans in Congress.

The latest Post-ABC News poll shows the president's overall approval rating at a new low of 50 percent—about the rating President Bush had going into the November 2004 election, when Democrats said Bush was ripe for defeat.

There are many reasons for this drop in support for Obama. The stagnant economy is the biggest factor, but close behind is the fact that the administration is pushing health-reform efforts that have polarized the electorate, and that independent and swing voters have moved against in large measure.

As Wednesday's Post-ABC poll shows, a majority of Americans believe that if this bill passes, their health-care costs will rise, the federal deficit will increase, the costs of the overall health-care system will climb, and their own care would be better if the system stays as is. Democrats (including former President Bill Clinton) claim that they need this bill to pass for political reasons. But let's examine that. At present, a majority of Americans are against the effort, the legislation lacks bipartisan support, the costs of the reforms are upfront, and the benefits won't kick in until after the 2012 elections. When has that ever been a formula for political success?

If this legislation passes, Democrats will be held accountable for any failures or problems in the system. So if Americans' insurance premiums rise, they will blame the Democrats. If patients have to wait in line at emergency rooms, it will be seen as the Democrats' fault. If health-care costs don't drop, the Democrats will face the wrath of the electorate.

Many Democrats, including people in the administration, blame poor marketing for their difficulties in passing health reform. They say they haven't gotten the message out. But advocates of reform have spent millions on advertising and lobbying this year. And Obama, who many say is the best orator ever to occupy the White House, has pushed for this legislation constantly over the past six months. In that time, support for Obama's handling of health-care reform has dropped by more than a net of 30 points.

Yet before Republicans cheer that they may defeat this effort, they should beware what they wish for. A vast majority of Americans still believes that we need fundamental health-care reform. If the legislation fails, Democrats can blame Republicans by saying reform was in sight and the GOP blocked it without offering a real alternative to decrease costs and increase access.

The dominant issues today are the economy and jobs, and the public doesn't see either party making these a real priority. Further, polls show trust in government handling of domestic issues remains at historic lows. What most voters hear from Washington these days is squabbling over health reform involving a government role they don't trust and don't want.

My advice? Leaders in Washington ought to concentrate on what matters to Americans, not on what they think should matter to voters. Come up with a health-care bill that draws real bipartisan support. And before pushing a bigger role for government, begin to restore trust in the government's ability to do even small things. Democrats pushing so hard for success on health care could find themselves in a situation resembling President Bush's situation on Iraq. They could topple the statue and win the day, but lose politically over the coming months and years.

Letter to the Editor

Thanks, Coach!

This week the Northern Marianas bids farewell to a great coach and community member, Coach Sugao Kambe of the Northern Mariana Islands Football Association, NMIFA.

Since being loaned to us by the Japan Football Association early this year, Kambe has served as NMIFA National Team Coach and Technical Director. During this time, he has coached our men's and women's teams in several international tournaments and matches throughout the region. He has worked to develop our Northern Marianas base of players with our young U-11 and U-13 development teams. He has also assisted the numerous NMIFA committees (Executive, Men, Women, Youth, Interscholastic, Referee, Disciplinary, etc.) in the professional development of their programs, an important criteria of our new membership in the Asian Football Confederation.

While Coach Kambe's resume is substantial and his accomplishments are many, one of his most impressive qualities has been his spirit of service and humility. You might think someone with his vast international experience might lose patience with our fledging FA as we've stumbled along, both on the field and in the planning room—but not Coach Kambe. In his short time with us, he has been a generous resource of ways to improve football in the Northern Marianas. He patiently answers our many questions on many more topics. He takes extra time to develop individual players with private words of instruction or encouragement. He often takes the field alone to set up and breakdown equipment for practices and events. His leadership example will be missed.

Coach, thanks for your great leadership and best wishes on your return to Japan and new endeavors. Hope to see you in the Northern Marianas again soon.

Catherine Perry Anderson
NMIFA member

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲86° ▼77°	▲86° ▼77°	▲86° ▼77°	▲86° ▼77°	▲86° ▼77°

Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Showers	▲84	▼75
Palau	Rain	▲85	▼77
Yap	Partly Sunny	▲87	▼76
Chuuk	Mostly Cloudy	▲89	▼78
Pohnpei	Rain	▲82	▼79
Kosrae	Showers	▲88	▼76
Majuro	Showers	▲86	▼78

Around The Globe

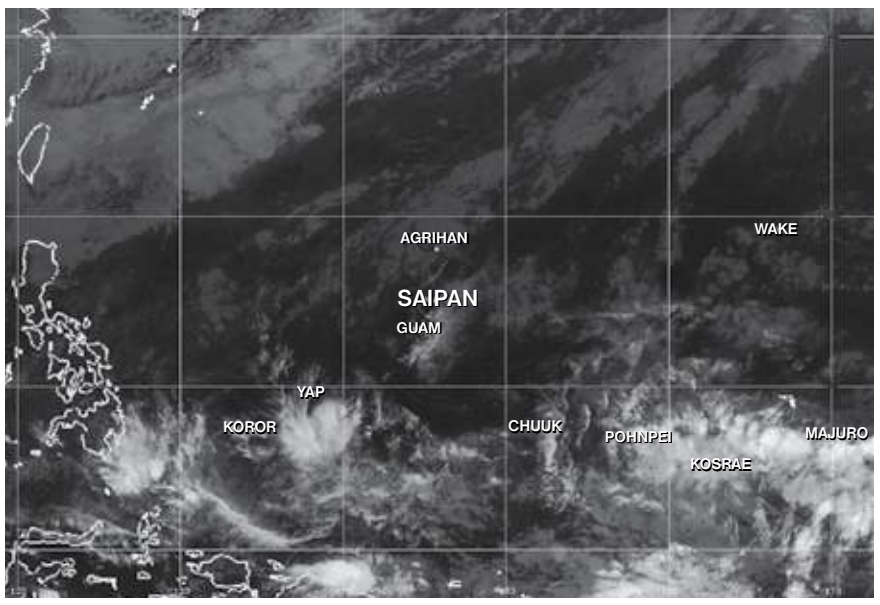
Auckland	Mostly Sunny	▲73	▼64
Beijing	Sunny	▲31	▼15
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	▲55	▼48
Honolulu	Partly Sunny	▲75	▼67
London	Cloudy	▲36	▼28
Los Angeles	Mostly Sunny	▲74	▼50
Manila	Mostly Cloudy	▲83	▼71
Melbourne	Mostly Cloudy	▲69	▼50
Miami	Cloudy	▲78	▼54
New York	Cloudy	▲35	▼26
Osaka	Cloudy	▲41	▼27
Paris	Cloudy	▲29	▼27
Pusan	Sunny	▲40	▼21
Rome	Showers	▲42	▼22
Salem	Rain	▲50	▼41
San Francisco	Cloudy	▲60	▼49
Seoul	Sunny	▲24	▼13
Tokyo	Partly Sunny	▲46	▼32
Washington, DC	Snow	▲30	▼25

Tides

Saipan Harbor

3:18 AM	Today	Low Tide:	0.3 Feet
10:33 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
3:57 PM	Today	Low Tide:	1.3 Feet
8:19 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00AM, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2009
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A near-equatorial trough stretches eastward from 3N130E to a developing circulation centered southeast of Kosrae at 4N166E. Scattered showers are occurring over Koror between 4N and 8N from 130E to 139E and southeast of Pohnpei within 110 miles of line from 4N157E to 1N168E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are found east of Kosrae and over the Marshall Islands within 160 miles of a line from 6N163E to 3N176E. A surface trough extends southeastward from 10N140E to 3N146E. Winds converging near the trough are generating scattered showers and a few thunderstorms east of Palau within 110 miles of a line from 7N139E to 4N148E. A weak circulation is centered east of Majuro near 7N176E. Scattered showers and a few thunderstorms are occurring between 8N and 6N from 174E to 177E.

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:37 AM	5:50 PM
Sunday	6:37 AM	5:51 PM
Monday	6:38 AM	5:51 PM
Tuesday	6:38 AM	5:52 PM
Wednesday	6:39 AM	5:52 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	7:50 AM	7:18 PM
Sunday	8:34 AM	8:09 PM
Monday	9:15 AM	8:58 PM
Tuesday	9:53 AM	9:46 PM
Wednesday	10:29 AM	10:32 PM

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 18, 2009

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

C09597	11:30am	12:05pm	1, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM

C09597	12:40pm	1:10pm	1, 7

SAIPAN-GUAM

C09317	4:25am	5:15am	Daily
C09313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
C09597	11:30am	1:10pm	1, 7 via ROP
C09601	12:20pm	1:10pm	4, 5
C09603	3:15pm	4:05pm	Daily
C09605	6:20pm	7:10pm	Daily
C09599	9:20pm	10:10pm	Daily

SAIPAN-NAGOYA (NGO)

NW287	6:00am	7:30pm	Daily via NRT

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

NW287	6:00am	8:40am	Daily
NW297	4:45pm	7:30pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:20am	6:50am	1, 5

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ604	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ119	4:00am	11:25am	Daily via Osaka effective Dec 19 Arrive OSA 6:40am, leave OSA 9:30am
OZ606	3:20pm	7:00pm	2, 4, 6, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

FM844	2:50am	5:40am	2, 6

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

CZ3008	3:30am	6:40am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ604/701	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ604/701	2:40am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ604/703	2:50am	11:25am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ608/705	3:20am	1:30am+1	1, 5 via PUS
C09603/933	3:15pm	9:40pm	Daily via GUM
C09605/933	6:20pm	9:40pm	Daily via GUM
C09599/PR111	9:20pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG

OZ604/721	2:10am	12:00pm	1 via ICN
OZ604/721	2:40am	12:00pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ606/749	3:20pm	11:00pm	4, 6, 7 via ICN

ARRIVALS

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

C09598	3:10am	3:45am	5, 6
C09312	1:20pm	1:55pm	6

GUAM-ROTA (ROP)

C09598	2:00am	2:30am	5, 6
C09312	12:10pm	12:40pm	6

GUAM-SAIPAN

C09316	2:00am	2:50am	1, 2, 3, 4, 7
C09598	2:00am	3:45am	5, 6 via ROP
C09596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
C09600	10:05am	10:55am	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7
C09312	12:10pm	1:55pm	6 via ROP
C09602	1:50pm	2:40pm	1, 4, 5, 7
C09604	4:50pm	5:40pm	Daily
C09606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily

NAGOYA (NGO)-SAIPAN

NW288	12:05pm	1:20am+1	Daily via NRT

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

NW298	10:05am	2:50pm	Daily
NW288	8:45pm	1:20am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	2:10am+1	4, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

OZ605	9:00am	2:20pm	2, 4, 6, 7
OZ120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	Daily via Osaka effective Dec 18 Arrive OSA 8:50pm, leave OSA 9:50pm
OZ603	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

FM843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1, 5

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

CZ3007	7:30pm	2:40am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ716/605	12:30am	2:20pm	4 via ICN
OZ706/607	3:35am	2:10am+1	4, 7 via PUS
OZ702/603	1:10pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/603	1:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR110/C09596	10:10pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
C0934/9596	11:10pm	7:50am+1	Daily via GUM
OZ704/605	11:55pm	2:20pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via ICN

HONG KONG-SAIPAN

OZ724/605	12:30am	2:20pm	2,4,6,7 via ICN
OZ750/605	1:00am	2:20pm	2,4,6,7 via ICN
OZ722/603	1:30pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/603	1:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

- E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com or jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com.
- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

Schedule of Religious Services

CATHOLIC

Mt. Carmel Cathedral
Sunday Mass: 6am, 9am, 11am and 6pm
Monday-Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6am and 6pm

Korean Center
Sunday: 10:30am
Wednesday: 10am
Thursday-Friday: 8pm
Saturday: 3pm and 7:30pm

Kristo Rai Parish
Sunday Mass: 6am, 8am and 9:30am
Monday- Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6am and 6pm
Saturday: 6am and 6pm

Nuestra Senora De Soledad Parish
Wednesday Mass: 6pm
First Friday Healing Mass: 6pm
Saturday Mass: 6pm
Sunday Masses: 7:30am & 9am

Saint Jude Parish
Sunday: 6am, 8am, 10am
Wednesday and Thursday: 6pm

San Antonio Parish
Sunday: 6am and 8am
Tuesday and Friday: 6pm

San Francisco de Borja-Rota
Sunday: 6am and 8am
Monday-Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6pm

San Isidro-Rota
Sunday: 5am and 10am
Monday-Wednesday: 7pm
Thursday-Saturday: 5am and 7pm

San Jose (Oleai) Parish
Sunday: 6am and 7:30am
Tuesday-Wednesday and Friday-Saturday: 6pm

San Roque Parish
Sunday: 9am
Wednesday: 6pm
Saturday: 10:30am

San Vicente Parish
Sunday: 6am, 9am and 6pm
Monday-Saturday: 6pm

Santa Remedios
Sunday: 7:30am
Tuesday: 6pm
Saturday: 10am-Baptism

Santa Soledad
Sunday: 7:30am

PROTESTANT

Born Again Christian (Upper Room Int'l Ministries), Saipan
Wednesday Prayer and Healing Night: 8-10:30pm
Saturday Tagalog Service: 8-10:30pm
Sunday English Service: 9:30-11am
Sunday School for Children: 10-11am
Sunday Filipino Service: 7-9pm

Calvary Baptist Church, Saipan
Sunday School: 9am
Sunday Morning Worship: 10am
Sunday Evening Worship: 6pm
Wednesday Prayer Service: 7pm

Chinese Christian Church of Saipan
Worship Services: Sunday, 10am and 7:30pm
Bible Study: Tuesday-Friday, 9:25pm

Cornerstone Christian Church, Saipan
Worship/Study Opportunities
Adult Sunday School: 9am
Youth Sunday School: 9am
English Worship Service Sunday: 10am
Sunday Service: 5:30pm
Worship/Fellowship Sunday: 9:30pm
Evangelism/Follow-up: Sunday/Monday: 1:30/7:30pm
Worship Team: Monday/Saturday-9pm;
Cell Groups Tuesday: 7:30pm
Mid-week Service: 7:30pm
Prayer Meeting Wednesday: 7:30pm
Leader's Bible Study Friday: 7:30 pm
Cornerstone School of Ministry Saturday: 7:30pm

Episcopal/Anglican Church on Saipan
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Worship Service Sunday: Holy Communion 9:00am
Place: Vicarage, Chalan Laulau,
Call 235-0545 for directions

Grace Christian Assembly, Saipan
Worship Service: 9am
GBI Classes: 4-6pm
Prayer Meeting: Monday-Saturday: 6am
Sunday: 7am
Home Cell Bible Study: Wednesday-Friday: 7pm
Youth Service: Friday: 5:30pm

Iglesia Ni Cristo, Saipan
Wednesday: 7:45pm (Tagalog)
Thursday: 5:30am (English); 7:45 pm (English)
Saturday: 7:45pm (Tagalog)
Sunday: 6:45am (English)
Children Worship Service: Sunday, 9am (English)

Immanuel United Methodist Church Koblerville
Sunday Services
9:00 AM
Place of the church-next to Mt. Carmel Cathedral on Chalan Kanoa Dr. • Tel: 322-6158
Pastor JJ Matsumoto

Immanuel Methodist Church (Filipino Congregation)
Sunday: 7:00am-Choir Rehearsal
8:00am-Church Service (Tagalog)
9:15am-Sunday School
Wednesday: 6:30pm, home group
8:00pm-Prayer Meeting
Thursday: 7:30pm-Choir Practice (Church)
Saturday: 8:00pm-Choir Practice (Parsonage)

Jesus is Lord Church, Saipan
English Service: 9-11am, Sunday
Tagalog Service: 6-8pm, Sunday

Korean Presbyterian Church, Saipan
Sunday School: 8:20am
Sunday Adult: 10am
Sunday Adult: 11:30am
Sunday Evening: 7:30pm
Wednesday: 8pm

Life in the Son Christian Fellowship, Saipan
Sunday Worship Service: 10am–12noon
Tuesday: Leadership Institute 7pm-10pm
Wednesday: Corporate prayer 7pm-8pm
Last Friday of the month-prayer: 7pm-11pm
Friday: Youth on Fire: 7pm-9pm
Tel. No. 235-LIFE (5433)

Marianas Baptist Church, Saipan
English Worship Service: 9-10:30am
Evening Worship Service: 6-7pm
Children Sunday School: 9-10:30am
Tagalog Sunday School: 11am-12pm
English Sunday School: 11am-12pm
Korean Worship Service: 11am-12pm
Wednesday Prayer Meeting:
English, 7pm-8pm
Korean: 8:30pm-9:30pm

Missions Connection Ministry
Every Sunday Celebrations:
10am (English), 6pm (Tagalog)
Wednesday Bible Study: 7pm
Youth Impact Friday: 7pm
Saturday Prayer Meeting: 7pm

Northern Marianas Christian Church
Sunday Worship Service 10am Fina Sisu Housing FS#1 (Child care will be provided)
Friday Services @ 7pm Fina Sisu FS#1 for more info pls. contact Ryan 484-2620

Saipan Bible Fellowship Church
Sunday School: 9:30-10am
Divine Worship: 10am-11:30am
Evening Service: 7pm-8:30pm
Wednesday Prayer Meeting: 8pm-9pm

Saipan Christian Church
Sunday: 7:30am-10am
Sunday: 6:30 pm -9pm
Monday: 8 pm -10pm (Prayer Meeting)
Thursday: 8pm-10pm (Cell Groups)

Saipan Church of Christ
Sunday Bible Class: 9am
Sunday Worship: 10am
Sunday Worship English: 6pm
Sunday Worship Tagalog: 7pm
Wednesday Bible Study: 7:30pm

Saipan Community Church
(Sunday Services)
Palau Service: 7:30am-9am
English Service: 10am-11:30am
Chuukese Service: 1pm-2:30pm
Filipino Service: 5:00pm-7:00pm

Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Saipan
(Saturday Church Services)
Sabbath School Program: 9-10am
Lesson Study: 10-10:40am
Divine Service: 11-12pm
Visitation: 3-4pm
Adventist Youth Program: 4:30-5:30pm
Sundown Worship: 6-7pm

First Baptist Church
(Formerly Saipan Baptist Church)
Afetna St., San Antonio
Sunday
9am Sunday school
10am Regular worship
6pm worship
Wednesday
7pm worship
Everyone is warmly welcome to attend our worship services. Transportation is readily available to anyone who needs a ride to our church. For further information, please call Pastor David M. Mclure at 234-1939/235-7779.

Thy Word Ministries Saipan Faith Center
Phone 234-0209
New Christian Charismatic Church Service located in Chalan Paio, Beach Road in the Sablan building on the 2nd floor above Subway Sandwiches.
Senior Pastors: George & Gail Kamakahi
Asst. Pastors: Eric & Penny Sakaguchi
Service Times
Sunday 10:00am Worship Service
Sunday 7pm Discipleship Classes
Tuesday 10:00am Bible Studies
Tuesday 6:00pm Intercessory Prayer
Tuesday 7:00pm Music Practice
Wednesday 7:00pm Mid-Week Service
Saturday 10:00am Evangelism

Upper Room International Ministries
Sunday 5:30am-6:30am Morning prayer
7am-9am English service
7am-9am Sunday school
10am-12noon English service, Koblerville
Wednesday 7pm-9pm Prayer meeting
Saturday 7pm-9pm Tagalog service
Venue: Jason Presbyterian Church
Gualo Rai, Saipan

Victory Chapel Christian Fellowship Church
Sunday School: 9:30am
Sunday AM Worship:10:30am
Sunday PM Worship:7:00am
Wed Worship: 7:30pm
Prayer 45 min. Prior to Service Times
Morning Prayer: 6-8am M-S

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Dec 19, 2000

JAL plans to deploy 9 more flights to Saipan
Gearing up to meeting the increased demand during the holiday season and the winter month of January, Tokyo-based Japan Airlines is dispatching nine additional flights out of three major cities in the country to Saipan. JAL-Saipan sales manager Yasuyoshi Kinoshita said the airline company will be deploying four extra flights from Nagoya, Osaka and Fukuoka to Saipan in addition to its daily flight services this month. According to Mr. Kinoshita, JAL is deploying five flights between Jan. 1-6, 2001 from the three major cities to the Northern Marianas in anticipation of the increased demand since overseas trips by Japanese travelers are normally high during this period when temperature is at its coldest in Japan.

TAG seeks 500K funding
The Tanapag Action Group has asked Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio to provide $500,000 in funding which will be used to carry out a congener-specific testing on members of Tanapag community. According to community leader Juan Tenorio, the money will also fund the blood test to be conducted on selected group of community members to verify the results of the earlier examination carried out by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry as well as the Commonwealth Health Center. "We made it clear to the governor that we want the testing done as soon as possible," said Mr. Tenorio. While the governor has pledged to help the Tanapag community, he also asked the Tanapag Action Group to lobby with the Legislature for assistance in identifying the needed sources of funding.

Dec. 19, 2001

NMI honors homegrown hero
It may have been fate that brought Emergency Medical Services Skills Retention Coordinator Derek T. Hocog to fly aboard Horizon Air last November 26, 2001, while transiting from Washington to Idaho for a national EMS training. The 29-year-old Department of Public Safety Fire Division employee, who was one among 39 passengers of that flight, made excellent use of his medical training when an elderly woman collapsed on the jet way, without sign of a pulse. Airline representatives seeking medical aid did not have to wait long for the assistance, as Hocog immediately volunteered to help revive the unconscious victim. "I immediately got out of my seat. Luckily, I had my EMS-issued pocket mask with me. I started performing CPR on the lady. After three minutes, the ambulance arrived," Hocog recounted the events yesterday.

Teenager facing criminal raps for credit card fraud
A former Saipan Grand Hotel cashier was slapped with 54 counts of criminal charges based on complaints she used someone else's credit card to purchase items and services from various commercial outlets. The Attorney General's Office, through lawyer Daniel Cohan, filed the complaint before the Superior Court, alleging that Adrienne Akemi Brown, 18, engaged in theft by deception, forgery, receiving stolen property and misuse of credit card from July until November 2001. The defendant, who used at least four different names or aliases to conduct the alleged fraudulent transactions, was arrested Saturday in connection with the charges.

Dec. 19, 2002

Rebates may be out Monday
Long awaited refund/rebate checks may finally be released Monday following tumultuous yet relatively speedy legislative action on the bill that would authorize the borrowing of $19 million to replenish the depleted Special Rebate Trust Account. Over the last two days, the House of Representatives and the Senate passed House Bill 13-240 or the legislation that would authorize the Department of Finance to borrow $19 million from the Bank of Guam so it could pay out all overdue tax rebates/refunds. The House passed the measure on a 16-1 vote Tuesday night, with Rep. Stanley Torres as the dissenting vote. The Senate concurred with the lower House action yesterday morning on a 7-0 vote. Both Senate Floor Leader Joaquin G. Adriano and Sen. David M. Cing were absent.

Business

Economic reports point to a 'gradual' recovery

WASHINGTON (AP)—A report on unemployment claims and a forecast of U.S. economic activity pointed Thursday to an economy mending slowly, without the job growth needed to fuel a vigorous recovery.

The number of newly laid-off workers filing claims for unemployment benefits unexpectedly rose last week. But the four-week average for jobless claims, which smooths out fluctuations, fell. That was an encouraging sign that the pace of layoffs continues to decline. The four-week average is now at its lowest point since late September 2008, when the financial crisis hit with full force.

Separately, a forecast of economic activity rose for the eighth straight month in November, a private research group said, signaling the economic rebound will continue into next year.

Still, employers across the country remain reluctant to ramp up hiring.

"People who have already lost their job are having incredible difficulty finding a job," Dan Greenhaus, an economist at Miller Tabak, said in a research note Thursday.

A big problem is that companies lack confidence in the strength and sustainability of the recovery. FedEx Corp., for example, offered a tepid outlook Thursday for the quarter that ends in January. The package delivery company expects the recovery to continue next year. But FedEx questioned whether demand for its services will stay strong after the peak holiday-shipping season.

Stocks fell on concerns about a still-weak job market and after FedEx's forecast fell short of expectations. In mid-afternoon trading, the Dow Jones industrial average was down 98 points, or about 0.9 percent. Broader stock averages also fell.

The Conference Board said its index of leading economic indicators rose 0.9 percent last month, up from 0.3 percent in October. The latest reading beat the 0.7 percent rise that economists surveyed by Thomson Reuters had expected.

The board forecasts economic activity by measuring claims for unemployment aid, stock prices, consumer expectations, building permits for private homes, the money supply and other data. Improvements in financial conditions, housing permits and the labor market boosted the index, said Conference Board economist Ataman Ozyildirim.

Senate panel approves Bernanke nomination

WASHINGTON(AP)—ASenate panel on Thursday approved the nomination of Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke to run the nation's central bank for another four years.

The Senate Banking Committee voted 16-7 to send Bernanke's nomination to the full Senate for consideration. Approval came after a two-hour debate that heaped both praise and criticism on the Fed chief.

In voting for Bernanke, the panel's chairman, Sen. Christopher Dodd, D-Conn., said Bernanke's "wise leadership" will mean "better days do lie ahead."

Although Bernanke, 56, appears to have enough votes in the Senate to win a second term, six Republicans and one Democrat on the committee did line up against him. They blame him for not spotting problems that led to the financial crisis, failing to protect consumers and supporting Wall Street bailouts.

Bernanke's nomination comes at the height of public anger toward the Fed.

Many ordinary Americans were disgusted by the Wall Street bailouts and hefty bonuses paid to employees of those rescued companies, while Main Street continued to suffer from rising unemployment, record-high home foreclosures and stagnant wages.

In turn, legislation in Congress would rein in the Fed's powers, and a House-passed provision would subject the Fed to an audit by congressional investigators.

The opposition to Bernanke came from an odd coalition of liberals and conservatives.

Sen. Richard Shelby of Alabama, the top-ranking Republican on the committee, was among the seven senators voting no.

"Our trust and confidence were misplaced," Shelby said of Bernanke's leadership.

The others voting against Bernanke were: Republicans Jim Bunning of Kentucky, Jim DeMint of South Carolina, David Vitter of Louisiana, Kay Bailey Hutchison of Texas and Mike Crapo of Idaho. The sole dissenting Democrat was Jeff Merkley of Oregon.

"We can't have a Federal Reserve that the majority of Americans no longer trust, and that's what we have today," said DeMint.

Nation

Health care bill in balance without Nelson's vote

WASHINGTON (AP)—A year in the making, sweeping health care legislation backed by President Barack Obama hung in the balance Thursday as conservative Democratic Sen. Ben Nelson withheld his vote in pursuit of stricter abortion limits and liberals grew restive on the left.

Any lingering hopes the bill's supporters had of a Republican casting a critical 60th vote vanished when Sen. Olympia Snowe, R-Maine, said after a meeting with Obama that the Democrats' timetable for a pre-Christmas vote was "totally unrealistic."

Nelson, the most conservative Democrat in the Senate, was vague throughout the day about his intentions, eventually telling reporters, "I hope we're getting closer" to agreement.

"Without modifications, the language concerning abortion is not sufficient," he said earlier in the day in a written statement that summarized the results of days of private negotiations. The second-term Nebraskan opposes the procedure and wants tighter restrictions written into the overhaul.

With Nelson's support, the White House and Senate Democrats would command 60 votes for the health care measure, enough to overcome a Republican filibuster and pass the bill within a matter of days.

Without it, the prospects are far more uncertain, given unyielding Republican opposition on the conservative right as well as growing expressions of unhappiness on the left that sent the White House scrambling.

"The absolute refusal of Republicans in the Senate to support health care reform and the hijacking of the bill by defenders of the insurance industry have brought us a Senate bill that is inadequate," Richard Trumka, head of the AFL-CIO, said in a statement.

AP

Sen. Roland Burris, D-Ill., is seen heading to the Senate Subway on Capitol Hill in Washington, Wednesday, Dec. 16, 2009.

His criticism of GOP lawmakers aside, Trumka's blast seemed aimed at Nelson, Joe Lieberman, I-Conn., and possibly other members of the Senate Democratic caucus who have successfully stripped the legislation of any form of government-run insurance option.

Andrew Stern, head of the Service Employees International Union, said he, too, was deeply disappointed in the bill.

But like Trumka, he stopped short of urging its defeat. Not so Howard Dean, the former national party chairman, who has said he would oppose the legislation because it does not include a strong enough role for the government in a remade health care system. Dean unleashed his criticism this week after Lieberman won the deletion of a proposed expansion of Medicare from the bill.

Overall, the legislation is designed to extend coverage to millions who lack it, ban insurance company practices such as denying coverage because of pre-existing conditions and slow the rise in medical spending nationwide.

The bill would require most Americans to purchase insurance, and it includes hundreds of billions of dollars in subsidies to help lower- and middle-class families afford it.

Wrap-up bill likely to clear Senate hurdle

WASHINGTON (AP)—Must-pass legislation that wraps up the bulk of the remaining congressional agenda besides health care was expected to easily clear a Senate hurdle in the wee hours of Friday.

Anchored by a $626 billion Pentagon funding bill, the measure also carries short-term extensions of unemployment benefits, highway and transit funding, key pieces of the anti-terror Patriot Act and prevents doctors from shouldering a 21 percent cut in Medicare payments.

The timing of the post-midnight vote - which would defeat GOP stalling tactics and force a final vote to clear the bill for President Barack Obama on Saturday morning—has been governed more by the brawl over health care than significant opposition to the defense measure or its additional baggage.

Republicans are using every avenue available to them to try to delay or kill the health care legislation, including stretching out debate on the defense measure. It passed the House Wednesday by an overwhelming 395-34 vote.

The underlying defense measure provides $626 billion to the Defense Department for the budget year that began almost three months ago, a 4 percent increase for core Pentagon operations.

It includes $128 billion for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The president has yet to request funds for his recently announced troop increase in Afghanistan, and there is no money in the bill for that.

A stopgap funding measure expires at midnight on Friday, but White House budget director Peter Orszag has advised Senate leaders that no funding lapse would occur so long as Congress delivers the bill to Obama on Saturday.

The package contains about $465 million to develop an alternative engine for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, the Air Force's multimission fighter of the future. The administration said in June it would veto the legislation if it would "seriously disrupt" the F-35 program, an iffy threat at best. It has since backpedaled from the veto threat.

The bill contains no funds for new F-22 fighters. Defense Secretary Robert Gates staked his reputation on killing the program, which has its origins in the Cold War era but is poorly suited for anti-insurgent battles in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The measure also trims personnel and maintenance accounts from previous versions of the measure to pump up weapons procurement for Afghanistan and Iraq by almost $2 billion.

Report: Death sentences decline; death rows shrink

WASHINGTON (AP)—Texas and other states that lead the nation in executions are sentencing many fewer inmates to death, a trend that slowly is reducing the death row population in the United States, a report from an anti-capital punishment group says.

There were 106 death sentences imposed in 2009, the Death Penalty Information Center estimated in its annual report released Friday. That number is the smallest since capital punishment was reinstated in 1976 and compares with an annual average of 295 death sentences during the 1990s.

Fifty-two people were put to death in 11 states this year, nearly half as many executions as 10 years ago.

The center, which opposes capital punishment, attributes the drop in both executions and new death sentences to fears of executing the innocent, concerns about the high cost of the death penalty and laws that allow inmates to be sentenced to life in prison without parole.

Nine men who had been sentenced to death were exonerated and freed in 2009, the second highest-number of exonerations since the death penalty was reinstated, the report said.

Texas, which continues to far outpace other states in executions, has seen its death row population decline by more than a quarter in 10 years, mainly because of the decrease in death sentences. Harris County, Texas, which includes Houston and all by itself has put more people to death than any state other than Texas, has had no new death sentences for the past two years.

Statewide, nine people were sentenced to death in Texas in 2009, compared with 48 in 1999 and an annual average of 34 in the 1990s.

Ohio and Virginia—other states among the annual leaders in executions each year—recorded just one new death sentence each, although another Ohio inmate was resentenced to death by a three-judge panel after his sentence was twice overturned.

Robin Piper, prosecuting attorney in Butler County in conservative southwest Ohio, said horrific cases that appear to demand a death sentence often become more complicated as the facts of the case emerge.

Turns out, sunshine states really are happiest

WASHINGTON (AP)—People in sunny, outdoorsy states—Louisiana, Hawaii, Florida—say they're the happiest Americans, and researchers think they know why. A new study comparing self-described pleasant feelings with objective measures of good living found these folks generally have reason to feel fine.

The places where people are most likely to report happiness also tend to rate high on studies comparing things like climate, crime rates, air quality and schools.

The happiness ratings were based on a survey of 1.3 million people across the country by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It used data collected over four years that included a question asking people how satisfied they are with their lives.

Economists Andrew J. Oswald of the University of Warwick in England and Stephen Wu of Hamilton College in Clinton, N.Y., compared the happiness ranking with studies that rated states on a variety of criteria ranging from availability of public land to commuting time to local taxes.

Probably not surprisingly, their report in Friday's edition of the journal Science found the happiest people tend to live in the states that do well in quality-of-life studies.

Yet Oswald says "this is the first objective validation of 'happiness' data," which is something he says economists have been reluctant to use in the past.

"Very loosely, you could say that we prove that happiness data are 'true,'—such data have genuine objective informational content," he said.

"Moreover," Oswald added, "it is interesting to uncover the pattern of life-satisfaction across one of the world's important nations."

Ranking No. 1 in happiness was Louisiana, home of Dixieland music and Cajun/Creole cooking.

Oswald urged a bit of caution in that ranking, however, noting that part of the happiness survey occurred before Hurricane Katrina struck the state, and part of it took place later. Nevertheless, he said, "We have no explicit reason to think there is a problem" with the ranking.

ACROSS THE NATION

11 baby deaths now linked to Simplicity cribs

WASHINGTON (AP)—Despite several recalls and warnings, the number of reported baby deaths linked to defective Simplicity cribs has risen to 11. The most recent death occurred in September when a 7-month-old child from Princeton, Ky., became entrapped in the crib when a part of it broke, the Consumer Product Safety Commission said Thursday. The agency also said it's aware of 25 other incidents involving drop-side parts detaching from Simplicity cribs.

Fla. man exonerated after 35 years behind bars

BARTOW, Fla. (AP)—James Bain used a cell phone for the first time Thursday, calling his elderly mother to tell her he had been freed after 35 years behind bars for a crime he did not commit. Mobile devices didn't exist in 1974, the year he was sentenced to life in prison for kidnapping a 9-year-old boy and raping him in a nearby field. Neither did the sophisticated DNA testing that officials more recently used to determine he could not have been the rapist. "Nothing can replace the years Jamie has lost," said Seth Miller, a lawyer for the Florida Innocence Project, which helped Bain win freedom. "Today is a day of renewal."

Cops: Missing Utah mom's son confirms camping trip

PUYALLUP, Wash. (AP)—Police searched the home of a missing Utah mother on Thursday as family members held a tearful news conference in which they expressed their sadness that the husband has been named a person of interest in the investigation. Susan Powell, a 28-year-old mother of two young children, was reported missing Dec. 7 when she didn't show up for her stockbroker job at a bank. She was last seen a day earlier. Her husband, Josh Powell, said he went camping with the couple's boys, ages 2 and 4, in subfreezing temperatures in the middle of the night Dec. 7 and returned in the evening.

World

US aid offer boosts deal at UN climate talks

COPENHAGEN (AP)—Large pieces of a climate deal fell into place Thursday with new offers from the U.S. and China, but other tough issues remained before President Barack Obama and other leaders can sign off on a political accord to contain the threat of an overheated world.

An announcement by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton that the United States would contribute to a climate change fund amounting to $100 billion a year by 2020 was quickly followed by an offer from China to open its books on carbon emissions to international review.

The U.S. delegation did not immediately react to the offer by Vice Foreign Minister He Yafei. But it went a long way toward the U.S. demand that China report on its actions to limit the growth of Beijing's carbon emissions and allow experts to go over its data.

The sudden concessions on the eve of Friday's final session lifted hopes that the 193-nation conference could reach a framework agreement that could be refined into a legal accord next year on limiting greenhouse gas emissions and fighting climate change.

Obama and Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao were to join more than 110 world leaders for the last scheduled day of the conference, which for most of its two weeks was embroiled in angry exchanges, a partial boycott by African countries and another entire day wasted in procedural wrangling. It's also possible that once the world leaders depart, the talks could continue at the ministerial level and stretch late into the night and early Saturday.

A pair of Greenpeace activists crashed a Thursday night banquet hosted by Denmark's Queen Margrethe for the world leaders already in town. The couple, dressed in formal wear, unfurled two banners reading "Politicians Talk, Leaders Act" as they walked on the red carpet reception line, and were dragged from the hall by security guards.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and more than a dozen other leaders returned to work from the banquet to forge a political declaration, and were expected to meet into the early hours of Friday. They were seeking to include a range of emissions targets for rich and developing nations and outline financial commitments, said several European diplomats who spoke on condition of anonymity. It also may set deadlines for reaching a legal binding climate pact by the next U.N. conference in Mexico City next November, they said.

The conference seems likely to fall short of the goal set by many developing countries for a deal that would be legally binding on all parties and guarantee the kind of dramatic emissions reductions by the industrial world that threatened nations feel are necessary.

Yvo de Boer, the U.N.'s top climate official, said a political deal by the small group could be the key to unlocking the negotiating stalemate on a host of issues.

SKorea delivers swine flu medicine to NKorea

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—A convoy of South Korean trucks crossed the border into North Korea on Friday to deliver swine flu medicine, a day after Pyongyang threatened retaliation over naval drills around their disputed sea border.

The previously scheduled delivery across the heavily armed border came a day after North Korea threatened retaliation over what it claimed were South Korean naval drills around their disputed sea border, accusing Seoul of attempting to escalate tension.

The shipment marks the South Korean government's first humanitarian aid since conservative President Lee Myung-bak took office in early 2008 with a pledge to pursue a hardline policy toward the North and hold it accountable to its nuclear disarmament pledges.

North Korea acknowledged for the first time last week that swine flu had broken out in the country after Seoul offered unconditional aid to help contain its spread. The North did not mention any virus-related deaths, but a Seoul-based civic group claimed that the disease had killed about 50 people in the North since early November.

South Korea sent enough doses of the antiviral drugs Tamiflu and Relenza for 500,000 North Koreans, according to Seoul's Unification Ministry, which handles inter-Korean affairs.

On Thursday, the North's Korean Central News Agency had cited an unidentified source as saying that the South Korean military staged underwater explosive exercises around the border - the scene of a naval clash last month that left one North Korean sailor dead and three others wounded.

The drills represent "a threat and an unpardonable act of crime against us," KCNA said.

"We cannot but view this as a premeditated provocation aimed at raising tension in the militarily sensitive waters," it said. "We will deal a merciless retaliatory blow if the South Korean warlike forces keep staging military provocations" near the border.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff dismissed the North's claim, saying Friday the drills were routine and took place in the South's waters.

North Korea has often made such accusations and the South has rejected them. Pyongyang, known for its use of fiery rhetoric, also regularly threatens South Korea with destruction.

The communist North does not recognize the sea boundary, drawn by the United Nations at the end of the 1950-53 Korean War, and has long claimed that it should be redrawn farther south. The dispute led to deadly skirmishes in 1999, 2002 and last month.

Pakistan bans minister's travel after graft ruling

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP)—Pakistan's anti-corruption agency has barred the defense minister and nearly 250 other top officials from leaving the country as political turmoil deepens following a Supreme Court ruling that struck down a graft amnesty.

The agency said Thursday that the officials were now under investigation following this week's court verdict, which meant that up to 8,000 graft and other cases dating back to the 1990s have, or will soon be, reopened. The decision has roiled the country's political elite just as the United States is looking for a solid partner to help it fight against al-Qaida and the Taliban along the Afghan border.

U.S.-allied President Asif Ali Zardari and several of his key aides are among those who benefited from the amnesty deal. Zardari is protected by constitutional immunity from any criminal prosecution, but opponents say they plan to challenge his eligibility for office.

Pakistan's anti-corruption agency said 247 people who had cases withdrawn under the amnesty had been blocked from travel because cases against them were now under investigation. It did not say who was on the list, but Pakistani news channels reported that Interior Minister Rehman Malik—a key aide of Zardari—was included, as well as Defense Minister Ahmed Mukhtar.

Mukhtar told a local television station that immigration officials at the airport had barred him from boarding a Pakistani International Airlines plane to China along with the navy chief late Thursday. He said he planned to take delivery of a new warship. It was not clear what he was being investigated for.

While the armed forces are under nominal civilian control, analysts say that in reality the top brass—not Mukhtar—make the decisions regarding defense issues. As such, investigations against him and Malik are not expected to directly impact the country's fight against militancy in the border regions.

Wednesday's Supreme Court ruling has significantly weakened Zardari and raised question marks over his future. It has been welcomed by many Pakistanis, who viewed the graft amnesty as an immoral piece of legislation that whitewashed the crimes of the elite.

WORLD BRIEFS

Report: Blast in northern Myanmar kills 7

YANGON, Myanmar (AP)—A bomb planted at a fair celebrating the ethnic Karen minority's New Year holiday killed seven people and wounded 11 others, state media reported Friday. The bomb exploded Wednesday evening near food stalls at a festival ground in Hpa-pun in northern Karen state where celebrations were under way for the lunar Karen New Year, the Myanma Ahlin newspaper reported. Myanmar's tightly controlled state media typically reports violence several days after it occurs. No one claimed responsibility for the blast, which the newspaper blamed on rebels from the Karen National Union. The KNU has been fighting for more than 60 years for greater autonomy from Myanmar's central government, but its strength has dwindled over the past decade because of army offensives and divisions within its ranks.

Hunger-striking activist flown from Spain

MADRID (AP)—Spanish news reports say an activist from the disputed territory of Western Sahara who has been on hunger strike in Spain for more than a month has been flown back home. Cadena SER radio says Aminatou Haidar was flown out of Lanzarote island airport in the Canary Islands shortly after 10:30 p.m. (2130 GMT) Thursday, bound for Western Sahara. Weakened by her fast, Haidar had admitted herself to a hospital Wednesday, suffering from stomach trouble. The return flight appears to end a monthlong, bitter diplomatic wrangle, chiefly between Spain and Morocco.

Venezuela's Chavez sees US threat in Dutch islands

COPENHAGEN (AP)—Hugo Chavez accused the Netherlands on Thursday of allowing the United States to use Dutch islands off Venezuela's Caribbean coast to prepare a possible military attack against his country. The Venezuelan leader said the U.S. military, to prepare for a possible offensive, has sent intelligence agents, war ships and spy planes to Aruba, Curacao and Bonaire, which are self-governing Dutch islands. "They are three islands in Venezuela's territorial waters, but they are still under an imperial regime: the Netherlands," Chavez said during a speech at a climate change conference in Denmark. "Europe should know that the North American empire is filling these islands with weapons, assassins, American intelligence units, and spy planes and war ships."

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
State Board of Education
Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9910(a), the Eleventh CNMI State Board of Education hereby gives notice that there will be a Regular Board Meeting on Tuesday, December 22, 2009 at 9:00 a.m. at the BOE Conference Room, 2nd Floor NMI Retirement Fund Bldg., Capitol Hill, Saipan.

AGENDA

I. **Preliminary**
 a. Call to Order
 b. Roll Call
 c. Adoption of Agenda
 d. Adoption of Minutes – August 26, 2009 RBOE Meeting

II. **Public Comments**[1]

III. **Executive Session**[2]
 a. Legal Updates
 b. Personnel Matters
 c. Other matters

IV. **Reports**
 a. Chair
 b. Board Committees
  i. CIA
  ii. CIP
  iii. FPA
  iv. LIA
  v. School Reform
  vi. Ad Hoc
  vii. Special Education & Early Childhood
 c. Private Schools & Non-Public School Representative
 d. Student Representative
 e. Teacher Representative
 f. Commissioner of Education
  i. Financial Status Reports (Federal & Local)
  ii. Personnel Matters
  iii. Head Start Program Report
   1. Statistical Information
   2. Lead Screening Results follow-up
   3. Self Assessment
   4. Monitoring
  iv. Other matters

V. **Old Business**
 a. Amendment to Record Retention for job applications and eligibility lists [§§60-30.3-114 and 60-30.3-138 of the NMI Admin. Code, ref: 1306
 b. NMI History & CCLHS Content Knowledge Tests
 c. Policy 60-20-430(c) – Grade Placement for Transfer Students [formerly 2510(c)] Proposed as Final Policy
 d. Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse or Suspected Child Abuse - Proposed Rules
 e. Legal Counsel Position

VI. **New Business**
 a. 2009 Annual Report
 b. FY 2009 Audit Report
 c. FY 2010 Consolidated Grant Application
 d. Head Start's revised Selection Criteria
 e. Allocations of Fund for BOE Professional Development
 f. NMIRF letter on "Failure to remit worker's compensation coverage"
 g. Emergency Logistics Management Operations Manual
 h. Solicitation Policy
 i. Policy Update Work

VII. **Miscellaneous Matters**
 a. Evening with the Board
 b. Function with NMC Board of Regents
 c. Board Retreat and Professional Development Sessions
 d. Legislative Initiative 15-03, HD1

VII. **Discussion of Agenda for next Board Meeting**
 a. Board Inaugural Meeting

VIII. **Adjournment**

[1] Pursuant to BOE Policy 0415, public comments are limited to 30 minutes. We ask that remarks be limited to 3 minutes each. Everyone is welcomed to submit written comments.
[2] Pursuant to 1 CMC §9912, the Board may vote to meet in executive session at any time.

Maharlika
PINOY LIFE IN THE MARIANAS
Saturday, December 19, 2009

Advance parole procedures for the CNMI

DOWNLOADS

Form I-131 Application For Travel Document: http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.5af9bb95919f35e66f614176543f6d1a/?vgnextoid=b11747a55773d010VgnVCM10000048f3d6a1RCRD&vgnextchannel=db029c7755cb9010VgnVCM10000045f3d6a1RCRD
Form G-325 Biographic Information: http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.5af9bb95919f35e66f614176543f6d1a/?vgnextoid=a0e747a55773d010VgnVCM10000048f3d6a1RCRD&vgnextchannel=db029c7755cb9010VgnVCM10000045f3d6a1RCRD

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services is reminding aliens living in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to apply for Advance Parole before traveling abroad if they do not have U.S. lawful permanent resident status or an appropriate U.S. visa (not a visa for "B" visitor admission only).

Advance Parole is permission to re-enter the United States after traveling outside the United States, and allows people lawfully living and working in the CNMI during the period ending Nov. 27, 2011, to continue to do so when they return from foreign travel. It will also allow processing of a pending application for adjustment of status to that of lawful permanent resident to continue.

People living in the CNMI should do the following when submitting an application for Advance Parole:

APPLICATION PACKAGE

The application for Advance Parole should include:

- Completed Form I-131 Application For Travel Document. Download at www.uscis.gov/forms.
- Completed Form G-325 Biographic Information. Download at www.uscis.gov/forms.
- $305 check or money order, made out to the "U.S. Department of Homeland Security"
- 3 passport-style photos (2" x 2" front view. For details see http://www.uscis.gov/files/pressrelease/04_08_02photo_release.pdf)
- Copy of *unexpired* entry permit/umbrella permit
- Copy of photo page of your valid passport
- A statement explaining why you will travel, including any relevant documentation including ticket, E-ticket, itinerary, medical letter, letter from employer, etc.

SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION

Do *not* staple your check to the application, but attach check with a paper clip. Keep a copy for your files.

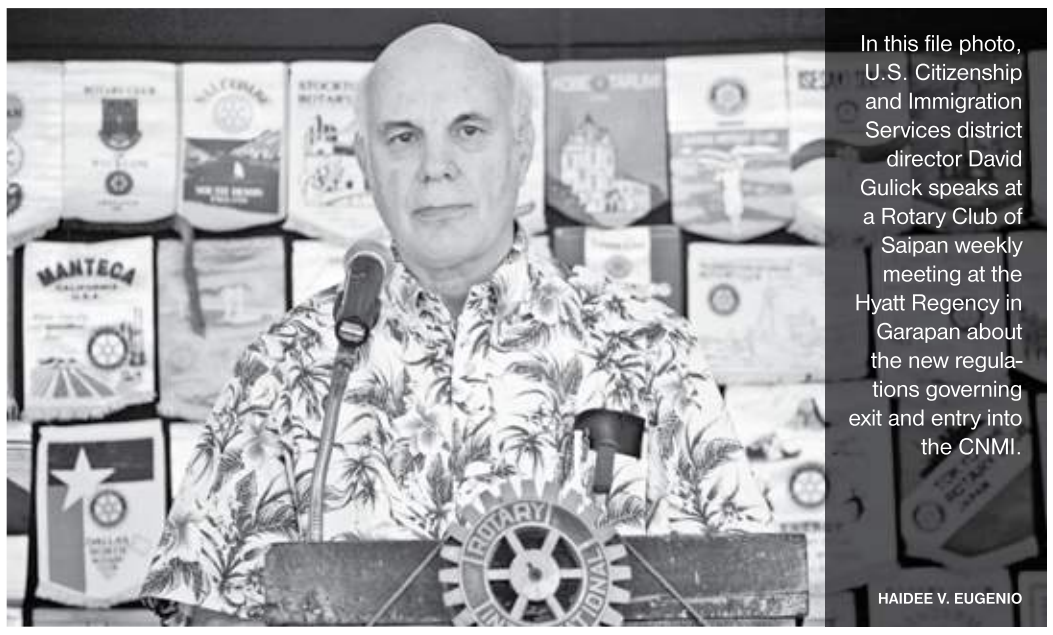
Mail all of the above to:
USCIS
Sirena Plaza, Suite 100
108 Hernan Cortez Avenue
Hagatna, Guam 96910

If you have an emergency and must travel within the next 72 hours, you may make an InfoPass appointment at the USCIS Application Support Center on Saipan through www.uscis.gov and submit the above package and a copy in person. If there are no appointments available on an emergency, go to the ASC at TSL Plaza on Beach Road on Saipan with the above completed materials.

For those holding unexpired CNMI permits who have already left to a foreign destination and are in need of Advance Parole, you must mail your application package to USCIS in Washington, D.C at the following address:

USCIS
Attn: Chief, International Operations Division
(Advance Parole – CNMI)
20 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Room 3300
Washington, D.C. 20529-2100

Have someone advise the USCIS office on Saipan at uscis.saipan@dhs.gov that you have mailed this application so that they can track it.


In this file photo, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services district director David Gulick speaks at a Rotary Club of Saipan weekly meeting at the Hyatt Regency in Garapan about the new regulations governing exit and entry into the CNMI.
HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

ON THE NET
www.uscis.gov/cnmi

EMERGENCY TRAVEL

If you have an emergency and must travel within the next 72 hours, you may make an InfoPass appointment at the USCIS Application Support Center on Saipan through www.uscis.gov and submit the above package and a copy in person. If there are no appointments available on an emergency, go to the ASC at TSL Plaza on Beach Road on Saipan with the above completed materials.

SEVERE CONSEQUENCES

Travel outside of the United States without Advance Parole may have severe consequences for some people who are now lawfully present in the CNMI; they may be unable to return to live and work in the CNMI after their travel. Without a grant of Advance Parole or other travel documentation that is acceptable under U.S. immigration law, they will be denied boarding by airlines flying to the CNMI even with a ticket for the flight.

People in the process of adjusting their status to U.S. lawful permanent resident should also get Advance Parole or they may be unable to return to the United States and their applications may be denied.

Note that if you filed a Form I-485 application to adjust status on or after July 30, 2007, you are not required to pay an additional fee to file the Form I-131 application for Advance Parole, if you did not file the Form I-131 concurrently with the Form I-485 already as is permitted. If you file a later application for Advance Parole as a pending Form I-485 applicant, you should submit a copy of the Form I-797C Notice of Action receipt as evidence of your filing of the Form I-485.

Aliens who have accrued more than 180 days unlawful presence in the United States should carefully consider whether they should travel abroad even with a grant of Advance Parole, as such travel may render the alien ineligible under section 212(a)(9) of the Immigration and Nationality Act for adjustment of status or other future immigration benefits for up to 10 years.

Read carefully the Travel Warning Regarding Unlawful Presence provided on page 3 of the Instructions to the Form I-131. Unlawful presence for purposes of section 212(a)(9) does not include any time spent in the CNMI before Nov. 28, 2009, under any circumstances, but it does include any periods of unlawful presence accrued in the CNMI on or after that date and any periods of unlawful presence elsewhere in the United States at any time.

Form I-131 Application For Travel Document and Form G-325 Biographic Information are available online at www.uscis.gov; by mail through USCIS Customer Service at 1-800-375-5283; or at the USCIS office at TSL Plaza On Saipan. ***(USCIS)***

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? LABOR FRONT

Asylum in the CNMI

By FERDIE PONCE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorres@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Q: Can an alien worker already present in the CNMI apply for asylum?

A: According to the Department of Homeland Security, an alien already present in or arriving in the CNMI, seeking asylum prior to Jan. 1, 2015, is not eligible to apply for asylum until on or after Jan. 1, 2015.

DHS said the asylum regulations are amended effective Nov. 28, 2009, when the federalization law took effect to preclude the availability of asylum to aliens physically present in or arriving in the Commonwealth prior to Jan. 1, 2015.

■ ■ ■ ■

Q: Does a U.S. immigration judge have jurisdiction over petitions for asylum filed by aliens in the Commonwealth?

A: According to DHS, the new regulations state that an immigration judge shall not have jurisdiction over claims for asylum made by aliens in the CNMI before Jan. 1, 2015.

An asylee may not adjust his or her status to that of a lawful permanent resident while present in the CNMI before Jan. 1, 2015. DHS says that this adjustment bar applies even if the asylee-applicant was granted asylum elsewhere in the U.S. and then relocated to the CNMI.

■ ■ ■ ■

Q: What will happen if the alien worker's application for asylum is found frivolous?

A: According to DHS, applicants determined to have knowingly made a frivolous application for asylum will be permanently ineligible for any benefits under the Immigration and Nationality Act. An applicant may not avoid a frivolous finding simply because someone advised him or her to provide false information in the asylum application.

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Life in Motion

More Filipinos leave homes as volcano spills lava

By BULLIT MARQUEZ
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

LEGAZPI, Philippines (AP)—Security forces in army trucks Friday sent about 3,000 residents outside the danger zone surrounding the smoldering Mayon volcano, which looked set for a major eruption after days of shooting ash plumes and spilling lava.

Authorities in central Albay province declared a round-the-clock ban on anyone being within the five-mile (eight-kilometer) zone around the 8,070-foot (2,460-meter) mountain, the most active of the country's 22 volcanoes.

More than 35,000 evacuees were given sleeping mats and food as they settled down in evacuation centers, mostly schools, where social workers were organizing Christmas parties and games to keep children busy, said provincial emergency management official Jukes Nunez.

Mayon shot two plumes of smoke early Friday, one reaching almost 1.2 miles (2 kilometers) into the clear blue sky. Lava continued to trickle down its steep slope, and two lava domes had formed from rising magma inside the crater, said chief state volcanologist Renato Solidum. He said the domes could grow bigger and plug the crater, leading to a gas explosion.

AP

Evacuees cook their meals amidst lava cascading down the slopes of the Mayon volcano in Legazpi city, Albay province, at dawn Thursday Dec.17, 2009, about 500 kilometers (310 miles) south of Manila, Philippines.

Scientists have raised a five-stage alert to two steps below a hazardous eruption, which they said is possible within weeks.

Solidum said cascading lava could trigger a pyroclastic flow—superheated gas and volcanic debris racing down the slopes at very high speed, vaporizing everything in its path.

Albay Gov. Joey Salceda said a provincial board had authorized police and soldiers to move out some 2,000 remaining families—or 10,000 people—from around two towns in Mayon's foothills.

Many had refused to leave their coconut and vegetable farms during the harvest time. Police will show them pictures of victims of a 1993 eruption that killed more than 70 people to persuade them to evacuate the area, he said.

Nunez said people were cooperating. "They know the danger. We have to enforce our objective of zero casualty," he said.

At the Bagumbayan Central School in Legazpi, the provincial capital, Guilly Anonuevo, a 75-year-old veteran of five evacuations, will spend Christmas for the first time in a shelter.

"We do not know where we will get our Christmas dinner. We have no money," she said. "It's all right to be sad as long as we are safe from Mayon's eruption."

RP police capture al-Qaida-linked fugitive

ISABELA, Philippines (AP)—Philippine government forces captured an al-Qaida-linked militant who had escaped from jail and dropped thousands of leaflets Thursday offering rewards to villagers for helping catch 28 other fugitives.

About 2,000 marines, army troops and police have fanned out to hunt down the detainees—most of whom face terrorist-related charges—who escaped from the southern Basilan provincial jail as it came under attack Sunday by suspected Muslim guerrillas.

Most of the 31 inmates who initially escaped were militants belonging to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, which has been sporadically engaged in peace talks with the government, and the smaller Abu Sayyaf extremist group.

A jail guard was killed during the jailbreak, police said. One inmate was killed, and another was recaptured.

Abu Sayyaf militant Aseng Sahibul was captured late Wednesday by police in Basilan's capital city of Isabela. Sahibul, who faces murder and kidnapping charges, has a $4,350 (200,000 pesos) bounty on his head, said Lt. Col. Gamal Hayudini, a military commander.

Hayudini led the dropping of more than 14,000 leaflets from two air force helicopters over Isabela and six hinterland townships, where the fugitives were believed to have fled. In the leaflets, the military offered rewards to villagers who can provide any information that will help authorities capture the fugitives.

The largest bounty, $43,000 (2 million pesos), was offered for the capture of Moro rebel front commander Dan Asnawi, who was detained with four other rebels after being accused in the beheadings of 10 marines during a 2007 clash in Basilan, a predominantly Muslim island about 550 miles (880 kilometers) south of Manila, the military said. The jailbreak was the latest crises underscoring the complexity of security problems in the southern Philippines, an impoverished region awash with firearms, outlaws, political warlords and Muslim insurgents.

Woman judge to try Ampatuans

QC judge refuses police's offer of security

By JULIE M. AURELIO
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—Judge Jocelyn Solis-Reyes is treating the trial of Andal Ampatuan Jr. for the massacre of 57 people as an ordinary case that would not require any special police security.

The case was raffled off to the presiding judge of Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 221 after Judge Luisito Cortez of RTC Branch 84 on Tuesday declined to try the alleged brains behind the worst political violence in the nation's history.

Citing a potential security threat to his staff and his household, the 49-year-old Cortez, who survived an ambush as a trial judge, told reporters: "What is glory without a family?"

Reyes declined to meet with reporters after getting the assignment following a second raffle Thursday at the Quezon City court.

The election-related massacre in Maguindanao on Nov. 23 prompted the imposition of martial law in the province for eight days to allow for the arrest of Ampatuan's father, three-term provincial governor, and three of his brothers and the investigation of over 600 armed supporters for rebellion.

Deputy Director General Jefferson Soriano of the Philippine National Police told reporters after a meeting with Reyes that the judge did not feel any immediate need for a bodyguard.

"If she does need one, she said she will call us," Soriano said. "She said she will treat this as an ordinary case. She was very composed, very confident when I talked to her. I don't think she was surprised, she is prepared to handle this."

Not taking any chances

Ampatuan is detained at the National Bureau of Investigation jail. NBI officials said they were not taking any chances for the appearance of Ampatuan at Friday's preliminary investigation of multiple charges against him at the Department of Justice, a stone's throw away.

NBI spokesperson Ric Diaz said the mayor of Datu Unsay town in Maguindanao province would be bundled in a bullet-proof van for the short drive, escorted by dozens of NBI agents.

A member of the court staff said that the result of the raffle dampened the office Christmas party which was coincidentally held at the same time.

"She felt sad. Of course, anyone who gets the case will feel sad," said the staff member. Soriano said that while Cortez had had death threats, Reyes had no such experience. "She has not handled any controversial cases before," he said.

The police officer, however, said that he assured the judge and her staff that the PNP was prepared to allot a "sizable number" of security escorts for the duration of the trial.

A University of Santo Tomas law graduate, Reyes was a public attorney for three years before she began serving as a public prosecutor in 1995. In 2001, she became Municipal Trial Court judge in Angeles City and started her stint in the Quezon City court in 2004.

A lawyer described Reyes as the "silent type" who did things by the book.

"She is lenient and considerate," the lawyer told the Inquirer in a text message. "She is poker mannered. You can hardly read what's her inclinations which is good so you won't leave anything to chance in getting things done before her court."

TAKE CHARGE

Cash or credit for Christmas purchases?

Editor's Note: This is part of Take Charge of Your Money, a partnership between INQUIRER.net and Citibank to help readers handle their personal finances well.

Question: I am all set to start my Christmas shopping. Although I wanted so much to start earlier, there was not enough time to do so due to much work. I have made out my list and decided on my budget. Now I am debating if it is better to use cash or my credit card for all these shopping. What do you suggest?—Noel

Answer: Ah, Christmas. It's a time for shopping and giving. Although you could have started on your Christmas shopping earlier, there's no need to worry. You still have time. And what's important is you have already made out your list and figured out your budget. You are indeed all set.

There are both advantages and disadvantages to using cash and credit card for shopping this Christmas season, and for all other times. Here they are:

When buying in cash:

Advantages:

1 You can easily see how much you have and how much you have left after spending.

2 You can buy in practically any store, whether in a mall or in a neighborhood bazaar.

3 It is easily transferable, thus you can ask someone to do the shopping for you.

4 Some stores have separate check-out lanes for cash buyers, and this may cut down queue time.

5 You may be entitled to some discounts for cash purchases.

Disadvantages:

1 You have to be extra careful when carrying cash as pickpockets can easily get it and use it.

2 If you are planning on buying a large-ticket item (examples: washing machine, computer, TV set), you need to bring a lot of cash with you.

3 If you wish to shop now, but don't have enough cash, you'll have to wait for the money to arrive (e.g. from your salary or other sources of income).

When buying with a credit card:

Advantages:

1 A safer alternative as you don't have to carry a big amount of cash with you.

2 You can buy large-ticket items on installment basis, sometimes even at zero percent interest.

3 By buying all your gifts with your credit card, you will have an itemized list of all your purchases come billing time for easier monitoring.

4 You can buy goods now even if you don't have the cash on hand yet. It's "buy now, pay later" with a credit card. That means you can pay for your December 2009 purchases in January 2010. Citi credit cards have an ongoing promotion called Pay Later which will allow to settle your purchase as long as three months after purchase date.

5 Some credit cards have rewards programs, allowing you to rack up points or cash rebates with every credit purchase. Points can later on be redeemed as gifts or treats. If you own a Citi card, you can now use these loyalty points to shop at partner stores, dine at selected restaurants, even book hotel stays - further stretching your money.

6 Check if your credit card offers purchase protection to buy you peace of mind. Citi cardholders enjoy free 30-day purchase protection from accidental loss or physical damage when they pay for their shopping and charge these to their Citi cards.

Disadvantages:

1 Although credit cards are accepted in majority of establishments, there are still some small stores which do not accept them.

2 You may spend more than you intended so keep a close eye on your budget.

As you can see, there are pros and cons for both buying in cash and with a credit card. Weigh them and decide what suits you best.

This season, a number of credit card companies have ongoing promotions which give you free treats with every purchase (Citi is giving free movie passes, for instance). Check out newspaper advertisements and your credit card bill for more information.

Now some more tips before you shop:

1 Don't buy the first item you see. Look around different shops and canvas prices to get the best deal.

2 Before shopping, do your homework to save you time. Browse the Internet or newspapers and magazines for gift ideas. By knowing beforehand what you will buy and where to buy, you can save precious time in this busy season.

3 Save all your receipts. Should the recipient need to return an item (if you got the wrong size, for instance), you can easily have it replaced by presenting the receipt to the store. Keep all your receipts in one envelope for easy storing.

Happy shopping!

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Maharlika – PinoyStyle

Dubai OFWs in the face of the emirate's credit crisis

By JOJO DASS
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

JOJO DASS
Christopher Benecio on his way to the airport the day he left.

DUBAI, UAE—With the repercussions of Dubai's worst financial crisis still hanging thick in the air like lost secrets, life for most Filipinos working in this Middle Eastern cosmopolitan enclave goes on; their resilience hanging tough against yet again another litmus test.

Christopher Benecio, a 30-year-old civil engineer from Roxas City, Panay came to Dubai in November last year along with four other Filipino engineers.

At the time, Dubai, where the bulk of overseas contract workers from the Philippines were, was already beginning to feel the effect of the global recession as companies started downsizing and retrenching in bulk.

By March the following year, all three of Benecio's batchmates had already been terminated, with the first to lose a job in January.

Benecio has gone back to the Philippines, having left Dubai on Dec. 5 this year on a paid vacation. But, he said, given the situation at the company where he was employed—Arif & Bintoak Consulting Architects and Engineers—he said he might opt to go back instead to the former firm in the Philippines where he was working at before moving to the Middle East, Megawide Construction in Makati, Metro Manila.

"We were getting less and less projects," Benecio said, adding that Arif & Bintoak has resorted to implementing a one-month forced unpaid leave to cut cost. "If there was still no project after that period, it's another forced leave or you can choose to be terminated," he added. This could not be immediately confirmed from company officials.

Prior to implementing a forced leave, the company cut the salaries of its employees by 10 percent; also taken away were fringe benefits, according to Benecio.

Moreover, he said, the situation at Arif & Bintoak is that of uncertainty. "You don't know when you'd finally get your notice of termination. It's very difficult to work under that situation," he said. "So why go back?"

Benecio did not divulge how much he was getting; he said he was able to save just enough to keep him and his family—a housewife and two children aged 6 and 4—going during the transition to his old job when he returns home.

Benecio said he has submitted his resume to several companies in other countries and was awaiting reply.

Dubai's construction sector was hardest hit by the global recession as the emirate's real estate bubble burst. This being a result of what financial gurus said was the reckless and unsustainable lending practices arising from the geregulation and securitization of real estate mortgages in the United States. These mortgage-backed securities reinforced risky lending practices and, in the process, fed a global speculative real estate bubble.

Unlike Benecio however, 58-year-old Alfredo Ranin, a former seaman who now is quality control officer at Wartsila Middle East and due to retire in 2011, said he'll finish his remaining two years with the company and go home where, he said, work is also waiting for him. Home is Orion, Bataan where his housewife, five children and five grandchildren are.

Ranin, who has been in Dubai since 1992, said Wartsila UAE is "still busy" providing services to various shipowners, including commercial ones needing drydocking.

He said several fellow OFWs have left Wartsila UAE, apparently to dodge the effects of the ongoing crisis. "They have sought better employment opportunities at another Wartsila operation elsewhere or at a different company."

"I'm staying. I'll finish the two years and head home," Ranin said.

Twenty-four-year-old Katrina "Kate" Oquialda, for her part, first arrived in Dubai on March 29, 2008 on a visit visa. She found a job in June of that year as a sales merchandiser. She quit in December 2008. Failing to find a new job, she went home in March this year, and came back in August, again on a visit visa.

All in a month's time upon her arrival, she found a job as a hotel receptionist, but resigned because she found a better-paying one as waitress at a beach bar, and then resigned again because the third one—cashier at a high-end candy and chocolate shop, Candylicious—is "much, much better," she said.

Candylicious is located in what has been hyped as the biggest mall in the world—Dubai Mall, a US$20-billion project that has a wall-sized aquarium and about 1,200 shops. It opened in November last year.

Oquialda, whose family lives in Pasay, said it was tougher looking for a job in Dubai earlier this year when the effects of the global recession was at its height. "There were more job opportunities. In fact, I was able to find three in only a month's time," she said.

Upon her return to Dubai, Oquialda, obviously a risk-taker, had about US$1,000, that, she said, her mother gave her, and which she used for the rent, utilities and food during the time she was jobhunting. With the high cost of living in Dubai, a US$1,000, which is equivalent to AED3,672 dirhams, UAE's currency, could only last for barely two months.

Oquialda said she'll continue taking her chances in Dubai. "It's a lot more difficult to find a job in the Philippines than it is here," she said.

Arnel Sanchez, who holds a degree in accountancy with earned units in MBA and MPA, arrived in Dubai on Jan.1, 2009, to try his luck. He came on a spouse visa arranged by his wife, Mary Grace, an architect by profession working currently as senior designer at Josef Gartner GmbH—Dubai.

Sanchez was able to secure employment as purchase officer at a steel company in the Dubai Investment Park, a free trade zone, around August. He, however, quit after a month apparently after having been persuaded by a friend to transfer to another company which has a better offer; but nothing came of it.

"I thought I would be able to move in to the new company, but nay. Now, I'm back to the grind, looking for another job. That episode taught me a lesson—be contented with what you have," he said, noting that in these trying Dubai times, the best way to go is stay where you are and weather it.

Sanchez said it's difficult to look for a job that fits his mold. "They [prospective employers] ask for a driver's license and 'UAE experience,'" he explained.

Being a purchase officer, Sanchez needs mobility and, therefore, a driver's license. It takes months in classroom lecture, driving lessons and actual driving tests; and, at times, up to AED10,000 (P130,000) to obtain a driver's license in Dubai because of strict government measures.

Seldom does one pass an actual test on a first try; it usually takes four to five attempts. A student who fails is required to undergo lectures again before going through another actual test. The repeated lecture and actual test require another round of payments, which explains the prohibitive total cost.

Jobless as he is, Sanchez's chances of getting a driver's license is nil—he doesn't have the money. Despite this, his hopes remain high. "Despite the challenges of the current economy here in Dubai and all over the world, I still don't think it's a bad time to be looking for a job. Demand is still high and good offers can be found in plenty of places," he said, adding that he will also opt to apply for other jobs.

Sanchez and his wife have a 5-year-old daughter staying with Sanchez's parents in Davao.

According to the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dubai has the most number of OFWs among the country's seven emirates.

The UAE, as of 2008, has 299,241 OFWs, of which 167,264 were in Dubai; 85,999 in Abu Dhabi; 28,856 in Sharjah; 9,824 in Raz al Khaima; 4,914 in Aj Man; 1,829 in Um al Qain, and 555 in Fujairah, according to MFA.

There were no immediately available official figures on the number of OFWs that have gone home due to the recession and Dubai's debt woes.

On Nov. 25, 2009, Dubai requested a freeze on debt repayments by its largest and most indebted group, Dubai World, liable for US$59 billion. This sent shock waves in stock markets around the world as equities dropped and fears of a looming collapse of the emirate's economy rose.

This reporter had since repeatedly tried to reach Philippine Ambassador to UAE Grace Princesa, and Consul Gen. Noel Servigon for their comments—but received no reply.

Ateneo book explains cultural reasons for Filipino diaspora

A Batangas village's unique tales of how it copes with the overseas migration of its families and neighbors are told in a book launched Dec. 16 by the Ateneo de Manila University.

But *Maalwang Buhay ("Better Life"): Family, Overseas Migration and Cultures of Relatedness in Barangay Paraiso* by sociologist Dr. Filomeno Aguilar, Jr. and his research team members John Estanley Peñalosa, Tania Belen Liwanag, Resto Cruz I and Jimmy Melendrez also explains the cultural contexts surrounding these families' efforts at managing the positive and negative impacts of what is called the "OFW phenomenon".

This one-year ethnographic study, done in a village called *Barangay Paraiso*, emphasized what Aguilar and company calls as the culture of relatedness that has been accompanying the large-scale OFW phenomenon since the 1970s.

What the culture of relatedness simply implies, the book explains, is that Filipino individuals and families are immersed in social and cultural relationships that are found in a village, and that begin with kin ties.

Thus, the authors contend that an understanding of these relationships by families and their neighbors, as well as their views, may help explain the underlying reasons and consequences surrounding Filipinos' overseas exodus.

For example, others may wonder that Batangueño OFWs construct sturdy houses for their families, but the ones bankrolling the construction efforts are not in the hometown—and only a few people reside in the European-styled house.

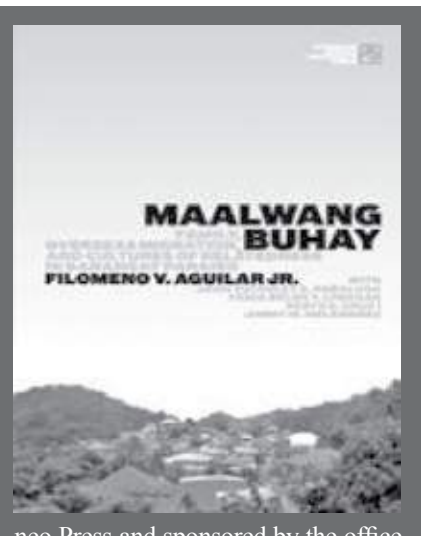
In that village, Aguilar and company found that OFWs constructed those houses so that they, the remitters, "still have a foothold in the homeland" despite their physical absence, and that those houses are "cultural statements."

"By clinging to the house and ensuring its regular upkeep, the absent family says in effect that their origins… have not been forgotten, even as the houses are showcases of a diasporic life," Aguilar, a board member of the nonprofit Institute for Migration and Development Issues, said.

"These houses serve to remind kin and village residents that the families that own them are still part of the community... The non-migrants reciprocate by still considering absent migrants and their families as members of the community."

Maalwang Buhay also contains discussions on overseas migration's consequences to Paraiso's marriage rituals, family unity, childhood and care of overseas migrants' children, text messaging and communication, caregiving, and schooling.

The book was published by the Ateneo Press and sponsored by the office of AdMU President Fr. Bienvenido Nebres, SJ. ***(Institute for Migration and Development Issues)***



Maharlika – Opinyon

For GMA, fate worse than death

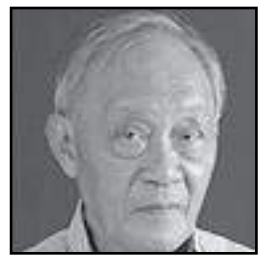
At the last Christmas party President Macapagal-Arroyo held with Malacañang reporters on Tuesday, she thanked the reporters for "your patience with me," and promised to make life easier for them in the remaining months of her presidency.

"I know I'm not an easy subject to cover," she said, "but I hope that in the remaining months of my administration, I'll be an easier subject for you." Having endured her mercurial temper for almost nine years now, the first thought that might have come to the mind of the reporters was that they would be better off if they did not have to wait another six months for her to step down.

As she prepares to step down, she stands as the president with the most troubled relationship with the media since President Ferdinand Marcos, who muzzled press freedom and imprisoned scores of journalists when he declared martial law in September 1972.

President Arroyo tried to be chummy with the Malacañang press corps in her effort to make up with them, but there were other things that haunted them. The "let bygones be bygones" party was held just days after the President lifted martial law in Maguindanao, marking the end of the first martial law declared in the country under a supposedly democratic 1987 Constitution.

The Arroyo martial law lasted only for eight days compared to Marcos' martial law which the country endured for 14 years. But for Malacañang reporters, the nine-year relationship between the media and the Arroyo presidency has been the most difficult and turbulent in any presidency since independence in 1946 because she did more damage to the freedom of the press than Marcos. Her Christmas party with the media took place against the morbid background of the Nov. 23 massacre in Ampatuan, Maguindanao, in which 57 innocent and defenseless people were massacred in the most brutal election-related violence in the country's history. The massacre was also the blackest day for journalism in the country. At least 30 journalists—more than half of the victims—perished in the slaughter, and the toll was the biggest in a single day in any part of the world convulsed by conflict, including Iraq, Afghanistan, and some regions of Africa. The massacre, it should never be forgotten, occurred during the Arroyo presidency.



Analysis

By AMANDO DORONILA
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

On that day of infamy, the Brussels-based International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) declared that the Philippines had effectively supplanted Iraq as the most dangerous place for journalists. The Philippines grabbed the top spot, leapfrogging Somalia, Iraq and Pakistan. The IFJ laid responsibility for these killings on the Philippine government. "At least 74 journalists have been killed during its nine-year term, yet the (Arroyo administration), has not acted to end the culture of impunity," the IFJ said. "At last count, only four convictions have been secured."

More damning, Elaine Pearson, deputy Asia director of the New York-based Human Rights Watch said, "Too many people have been gunned down in the Philippines while President Arroyo sat on her hands."

The difficulty experienced by the Malacañang press corps with the President is blamed dismissively by Palace hacks on her famous short fuse. Her temper is, and should be, the least of the worries of reporters covering Malacañang. It is far less menacing than the social, political and criminal environment in which journalists and political activists are murdered by gunmen under a culture of impunity fostered by government.

Under the Arroyo administration, journalists were arrested for the first time since the restoration of democracy in 1986, when she declared a state of emergency in the 2007 seizure of Manila Peninsula Hotel by military rebels. The journalists were arrested for covering the siege, allegedly for trespassing police lines and, in some instances, for being part of the rebellious conspiracy.

Palace reporters have bridled not only at the flare-up of her temper, but also at crude attempts at news management. It's not new to reporters that the President controls the agenda of Palace press conferences. She holds few press conferences and reduces the frequency. Other previous presidents have done this, some more restrictively than others. She vets the questions she allows to be raised in a press conference. Reporters perceived to be hostile are not recognized to ask questions and effectively barred from taking the floor. Like most previous presidents, especially Marcos, Ms Arroyo has mastered the art and deployed all the tricks of diverting embarrassing questions to less controversial issues.

Her promise not to blow her top on reporters and to be an "easier subject to cover" has become irrelevant to them.

Reporters know her days are numbered. She will be given fewer chances to display her temper after she steps down in May. She is almost certain to be elected as member of the House representing the second district of Pampanga. As a congressman, Ms Arroyo will and cannot control the agenda of the press conference as a bully pulpit, which it is for the presidency. She will surely have encounters with the congressional press corps. She will be competing for valuable space in the press with 250 other congressmen. She will no longer monopolize the attention of the press. Her temper will become an object of public curiosity, not a weapon for intimidating or muzzling reporters.

When that happens, she will seek the press and the press will not seek her. For diminished politicians, being ignored by the press is a fate worse than death.

EDITORIAL

Dynastic republic

In the immediate aftermath of the massacre in Ampatuan, Maguindanao, a stunned nation came to know of the true reach of the Ampatuan political dynasty; position after high position in the province, it turned out, was held by a member of the ruling family. A demoralized public reeled in disgust.

The disgust ran deep, because it was based, partly, on the shock of recognition. The well-entrenched Ampatuan dynasty is not an aberration in Philippine politics; it is, rather, the logical culmination.

The truth is: politics in the Age of Gloria is very much a family business. To be sure, the Arroyos did not start the tradition, and it will certainly not end with them. But the one power President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo enjoys and chose not to use is the power of example; she could have prevailed on her two sons and two in-laws not to run for Congress or assume a seat there. Instead, we have one Arroyo from Central Luzon, one from the Bicol region, one from the Visayas and one from the party-list system.

The opposition indulges in the same sin. In the Senate, there are the Cayetano siblings (both shamelessly using their late father's media brand, "Compañero," in their official names) just as there used to be the Ejercito mother and son. In the House of Representatives and in local governments, the dynastic web is thicker, more robust.

We can understand the uses of political dynasties. With one or two exceptions, we don't have any real political parties to speak of; instead, we have political factions, each one existing through the beneficence of a financier. For the most part, loyalty is a matter of money. Many of the parties contesting next year's elections did not even bother organizing party-building exercises, in the confidence that money (and ratings) will attract the necessary recruits.

In this bleak light, a political dynasty makes logical sense; loyalty (usually) runs deeper. What the marketing profession and the advertising industry call brand equity is also capitalized; consider, for instance, the case of the (squabbling) Osmeñas of Cebu. In the 2010 presidential election, all factions of the famous clan seemed to have coalesced behind the candidacy of Sen. Noynoy Aquino of the Liberal Party; but even if they hadn't, each would still have wielded considerable political influence. That they often conflict does not detract from the political value of the Osmeña name.

But we must also consider the obverse: The tradition of political dynasties is precisely one of those factors that prevent a true political party system from developing in the country.

Why change the system, politicians might ask? Dynasties help make things happen; they are a source of both cold cash and warm bodies. Besides, some of them may say, not all dynasties overreach like the Ampatuans. Maybe, but the reality is, dynasties—already outlawed in the Constitution, but still needing enabling legislation after almost 23 years—make a mockery of the democratic promise. A real political party system, funded in part by membership dues and in part by government counterpart funding, will allow any individual, regardless of pedigree, to rise through the political ranks. Without it, most Filipinos who want to run for political office will have to cultivate personal popularity, or marry into a political family.

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'Hams' for sale and other scandals

With elections around the corner, you can be sure that we will have many different scandals to delight or dismay us. Many of these scandals concern graft and corruption, which should really be brought out in the open and concluded in court with a jail term, but the scandals that really engage and titillate are those of a personal nature, the stories that deal with sex or money.

Years ago I acquired a bound volume of "The Philippines Gossip" (1909), only to be disappointed because the contents were quite tame. I blamed my expensive mistake on the late Candido Cruz who came to our home every other Sunday to cut our hair. "Barber Bidung" (as we called him) worked for the Koken Barber shop in Ermita but did home service because he cut my father's hair long before he got married and had children. Once, Bidung related how he earned a living in pre-war Manila selling newspapers in the morning. Hidden under the newspapers was a magazine called Scandal that sold like hot cakes. Bidung recalled that the best-selling issue had the golf-playing Roman Catholic Archbishop of Manila, Msgr. O'Doherty, smooching a lamb from his flock. I thought this was literally "kwentong barbero," until I came across a few issues of Scandal. No kissing archbishop on the cover but a fat old man necking with a young woman in bed. The caption said the magazine would award a prize to anyone who could identify the congressman and the actress "relaxing in a government cottage in Baguio."

Looking Back

By AMBETH OCAMPO
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Inside, there was a story of yet another congressman who had been robbed of P500 by a bailarina. The congressman had the thief arrested, but in the end he couldn't file charges because bringing the case to court would make his secret life public.

There was nothing new in the scandals reported: graft and corruption, even hulidap by kotong cops. There was wife beating, divorce, separation and the merry-go-round affairs of Manila's 400, proving that we have not changed very much as a people and nation in the past century. If there is any difference at all, it is the size and scope of the scandals. We do things big-time these days.

Scandal was bi-lingual, with articles in Spanish and English. Most engaging was the column "Ojos y oidos" (literally, "Seen and heard") that was part social register, part gossip. Unlike the society columns today that concentrate on the same people week after week, Scandal had more meat than fluff. Sex in high places (not sex on a mountain or an airplane) often overshadowed graft and corruption in terms of column inches. (Everyone can vicariously enjoy a sex scandal more than corruption.) For a magazine whose lifeblood was sex and scandal, it took a hardline on prostitution and the mushrooming of cabaret-roadhouses in places like Pasay and Quiapo.

Scandal covered the campaign of religious and civic groups against the Oriental Bar on Apelo Street, Pasay, near Taft Avenue owned by a certain Mariano Trinidad, a.k.a. "Marianong Itim."

Scandal had double-standards: it was anti-prostitution but carried innocent-looking advertisements for whorehouses. For example, there were advertisements for "Mayon Ham" that most researchers will gloss over, but since I am always searching for food in Philippine history I was surprised to discover that these "refreshment parlors" sold a different kind of ham:

"FRESH HAMS FOR SALE! The best quality in town—always fresh stock on hand. Price is conventional depending on customer's ability to pay. Cannot be, however, guaranteed, if pure and unadulterated. Insist on MAYON brand—don't accept any substitute. Try one and be convinced. MAYON a stonethrow [sic] from Bilibid and F.E.U. Azcarraga."

I noticed that the "ham" was not sold by weight, either in pounds or kilos, but rather by piece or by leg. The "ham" was openly sold close to Far Eastern University and Bilibid prison.

Did you take the "ham" home or was it consumed in the store? No visits from the police vice squad or the sanitary inspectors? Was I reading the ad correctly?

Another advertisement boasted: "Mayon brand the best in town—clean wholesome and delicious—Always new stock from Bicol and other provinces."

Mayon Refreshment Parlor was the biggest and most popular, but there were other options: Shanghai Bar on Dasmariñas between Calle Nueva and Rosario in Binondo, Sailor's Sunrise, Frisco, Irifune [Japanese for ships entering harbor], Casanova, Nepa, Agua Caliente [hot water], and Snug Harbor. All were open 24/7 with peak hours from 8 p.m. to midnight.

Low quality ham sold for P2 to P5 per leg, high-grade ones for P10 and upwards. Pay-when-you-enter was the norm and you needed at least P10 to have some "refreshment."

These establishments were concentrated in Quiapo around Estero Cegado, P. Gomez, Sales, Paterno and R. Hidalgo, once an aristocratic district that had seen better days. Today the area is filled with boarding houses and diploma mills with no trace of its seedy past.

The history of sex or prostitution in the Philippines is yet to be written and will make very exciting reading. Teasing the material out of the libraries and archives will be a challenge but this tidbit on Mayon Ham gives us an idea why whore-houses are also known as "meat markets."

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu.

Maharlika – Samu't Sari

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CJSO TRIP

Members of the Northern Marianas College's Criminal Justice Student Organization pose for a group photo with NMC president Dr. Carmen Fernandez, seated center. The students met with the president before embarking on their trip to Guam, where the students visited and toured various crime lab facilities at the campuses of the University of Guam and the Guam Community College.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

FIESTA DONATION

Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan officials present their "Healthy Lunch Drive" check to the CHC Volunteers Association in the amount of $407 collected for November. This the third month the hotel has made the donation to the volunteers' group, with the money going toward the association's effort to buy a hyberbaric chamber for the Commonwealth Health Center.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

SROTC PROGRAM

This is a photo of a group of Saipan college students in the SROTC Program at the University of Guam. They came to Saipan in November for a presentation at the Northern Marianas College to promote the SROTC program at NMC and to explain about the officers program at UOG. From left are Jana T. Tudela, William Torres, Joseph S. Tudela. Behind the, from left, are Martin Camacho, Barry Camacho, and Gary Camacho. Joseph Tudela Sablan will be graduating this weekend from UOG and will be the first resident from Saipan to be commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the U.S. Army.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

GOLD STAR RATING

Kagman High School's JROTC gets their gold star rating from the U.S. Army cadet command. This is a three-year accreditation inspection where each JROTC unit can earn a star status of white star merit unit, blue star honor unit, or gold star honor unit with distinction, which is the highest award. You must obtain a score of 96 percent or above to get the gold. This is the first gold star for the Ayuyus, an upgrade from the blue star they earned three years ago. Shown in photo are, from left, KHS principal Alfred Ada, C/LTC Jhumilyn S. Esposo, C/1LT Keisha Manglna, C/MAJ Conchitina Manibusan, Army Inspector SFC Baroldy, C/CPT Debra Buekis, Army Inspector Maj. Pratt, C/2LT Sandy Asao, Army Inspector LTC Howerton, C/1LT Chrystal Santos, and KHS Senior Army Instructor MSG James Burke.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A PASSION FOR READING

Mrs. JoAnn Dela Cruz, Teacher of the Year at Tinian Elementary School, shares her passion for reading. The students dressed up as her favorite Twilight and New Moon characters as a fun way to end a busy school week.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

US Army Inspector LTC Howerton is shown here inspecting the cadets. There were 10 areas that were inspected: Cadet Staff Briefing, Curriculum Knowledge, In-ranks, Participation, S1, S2/3, S4, S5, Color Guard, and Drill and Ceremony. The inspectors gave big kudos to the staff briefing that scored 100 percent on their presentation. Only one other school in Alaska scored that high in the whole western region of the United States of America that has hundreds of JROTC Units. KHS earned a 586.4 out of possible 600 points, 97.5 percent. Hats off to all the Ayuyu cadets. Great job!

Young Style

'Terra Cotta Warriors': An ancient emperor's toys

By MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN
(C) 2009, THE WASHINGTON POST

THE WASHINGTON POST
A view of the final chamber in the "Terra Cotta Warriors" exhibit at the National Geographic Museum in Washington. The show, which runs through March, culminates in a 5,000-square-foot gallery holding eight terra cotta figures.

WASHINGTON—Imagine the world's coolest and most collectible set of action figures. Now, picture them life-size.

That's sort of what you'll find at the National Geographic Museum, where an exhibition of 15 ghostly clay figures from China is now on view—part of a make-believe army of warriors and others created to protect and entertain China's first emperor after he died. Why was Qin Shihuangdi (pronounced "chin she-hwong-dee") so determined to take his toys with him in the afterlife? Maybe because he was only 13 years old when the whole project got started, more than 2,200 years ago. That's when the kid first became a king and when his subjects started planning his funeral. Creepy, right?

A more likely explanation is this: Qin Shihuangdi figured that if you needed it in this life—and a ruler definitely needs a few bodyguards—he'd probably need it in the next life. Here's some other interesting facts about "Terra Cotta Warriors: Guardians of China's First Emperor."

No two figures are alike. Of the 7,000 statues found underground by farmers in 1974, 1,000 have been dug up from the four pits (the largest of which is the size of two football fields). Guess what? Each one is different. Different face. Different hair. Different clothes. Different job. In addition to nine warriors, the show includes a muscleman, two musicians, a stableboy and a horse. Be sure and check out the jumbo-size head on the middle of three generals.

Humpty Dumpty had it easy. When the warriors were accidentally discovered, many of them were in pieces, as you'll discover in a display area that shows how the figures are repaired. Each one can take up to a year to put back together. Once they were put on display, some even got fungus on their terra cotta "skin." Fortunately, there's a special cream for that, developed in the 1990s by Johnson & Johnson. Yes, the people who make diaper-rash ointment.

Never a dull moment. The emperor wasn't just afraid of his enemies. He was also afraid of getting bored. Besides taking musicians to pass the time — Qin Shihuangdi's answer to the iPod—the emperor brought bronze birds, versions of the dancing cranes he kept as pets. (Two are in the show.) They probably would have been found next to one of several fake underground rivers, made of mercury, meant to be like the parks and recreation areas of his real-life kingdom.

Where are all the weapons? For an army, there sure wasn't much military hardware found in the pits. And only a few arms appear in the show, including a modern reproduction of a crossbow. Here's why: Shortly after the emperor died, peasants raided the pits, using the weapons to overthrow his successors.

Can't think of everything. Qin Shihuangdi brought money, kitchen supplies and building materials with him. He even took clay stableboys to take care of his clay horses. One thing he forgot? Women and girls. Everyone of the unearthed statues is a dude.

IF YOU GO

What: "Terra Cotta Warriors: Guardians of China's First Emperor."

Where: National Geographic Museum, 1145 17th St. NW in Washington.

When: The museum is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily and till 9 p.m. on Wednesdays. Closed Dec. 25. The warriors exhibition is up until March 31.

How much: Timed tickets are $12 for adults, $10 for seniors, students and the military; $6 for ages 2 to 12.

For more information: Your parents can call 202-857-7700 or visit www.warriorsdc.org.

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Time to get down with these CDs

By MOIRA E. MCLAUGHLIN
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THE WASHINGTON POST
It's hard to find good kids music out there, so this holiday season, KidsPost set out to find some. Just because parents find the lyrics to Justin Roberts' songs on "Pop Fly" funny does not mean the tunes are any less cool.

THE WASHINGTON POST
With a name like Robbert Bobbert and the Bubble Machine, how can you go wrong? This CD is more electronic and modern-sounding. The band likes experimenting with different, weird sounds.

THE WASHINGTON POST
Charity and the JAMband on their "Party Like a Twinkle Star" CD show that girls can rock, too, and they can rock while singing about things such as pancakes and rocket ships.

It's hard to find good kids music out there. You either get songs about ABCs and 123s, or songs about relationships and (ick!) love. So this holiday season, KidsPost set out to find good kids music. We looked for catchy tunes, funny lyrics and real musicians who just happen to be playing for you.

The following CDs fill the bill. The tunes are energetic, silly at times (but not goofy), clever (but not boring), danceable, cool and fun. We hope they will inspire you to rock!

Sarah Lee Guthrie and Family, "Go Waggaloo": Sarah's grandfather is Woody Guthrie, a well-known musician from a while ago. Sarah's music is beautiful and relaxing. She plays the guitar and sings. Her husband plays with her, and her daughters sing backup. It's a sweet, family CD. Think good campfire songs.

Peter Himmelman, "My Trampoline": If the song "Imagination" doesn't get you moving, check your shoes! Peter is a very talented musician. He's not just another goofy adult trying to make you laugh. The memorable tunes are fun and smart, and they will keep you humming all day.

Robbert Bobbert and the Bubble Machine: With a name like that, how can you go wrong? This CD is more electronic and modern-sounding. It's obvious that the band likes experimenting with different, weird sounds. "We R Super Heroes" is a totally fun song.

Charity and the JAMband, "Party Like a Twinkle Star": Girls can rock, too, and they can rock while singing about things such as pancakes and rocket ships. Check out Charity's funky "Row Row Row Your Boat." Or slow it down a little with the pretty song, "We Are Stardust."

Justin Roberts, "Pop Fly": Just because your parents find the lyrics (meaning the words) to these songs funny does not mean the tunes are any less cool. Justin seems to remember what it's like to be a kid. His songs are clearly about you.

Ziggy Marley, "Family Time": This is happy music. It's a little like reggae. (That's a kind of music that started in Jamaica and makes you want to lift your shoulders up and down.) You want to sway and smile? This is your CD.

By FRED BOWEN
Special to The Washington Post

The author of 11 kids' sports books, including four about basketball.

A coach's advice for young basketball players

I started coaching a fifth-grade basketball team last week, the Woodlin Warriors. I have coached lots of teams. But because I didn't know all the players and their parents, I sent an e-mail that set out some of the rules for my team.

After I e-mailed the rules, I took a close look at the list. I realized it's a good list for any kid playing basketball this winter, not just my Warriors. So here it is.

1. Be on time for practice and games. That means you should be at the gym five to 10 minutes before practice and 15 to 20 minutes before a game. Players need time to stretch and warm up in order to play their best.

2. Tell your coach as soon as you can if you are going to miss a game or practice. Coaches plan their practices and who is going to play in the games. If you are missing when the coach thought you would be there, that can really mess up the team.

3. Get plenty of rest before the games. Basketball is a tough game that takes lots of energy. You can't play well if you are dragging around the court. So the rule is: No sleepovers before games.

4. Don't yell at your teammates for making a bad pass or a bonehead play. Everybody, including LeBron James, makes mistakes. There will be times when you make mistakes, and you won't want your teammates yelling at you.

5. Don't even talk about the referees. Too many coaches, parents and players spend too much time complaining about refs and their calls. Calls that you think are bad or unfair are part of the game. Learn to forget about the calls and concentrate on your performance. More games are won and lost by the players than by the referees.

6. Practice on your own. Most kids' teams practice an hour or two each week. No one ever became a good basketball player by playing an hour a week. If you don't have a basket, practice dribbling on a driveway or in a parking lot. Or pass the ball back and forth with a friend.

7. Go watch high school basketball games. Pick a good player who plays your position and really concentrate on what he does. Notice his form when he shoots the ball, or how he positions himself on defense or where he moves when he doesn't have the ball.

8. Limit the video games you play. After coaching kids for years, I am convinced that video games make kids into watchers. Basketball is a game that requires you to move your whole body, not just your thumbs.

WHY IS THIS MAN SO HAPPY? Hidden in the above frame is a famous old saying. You can find it by reading every other letter as you go around it clockwise. The trick is finding the right first letter.

Answer: Starting with the "H" in the right rail: "He laughs best who laughs last."

Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend

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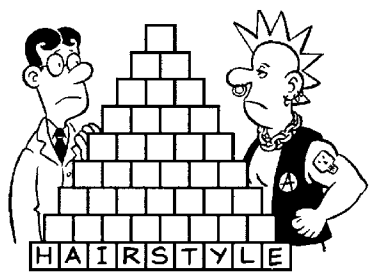


Illustrated by David Coulson

PYRAMID OF WORD POWER!

Let's see if you can comb out the correct words for this puzzle. Starting with the given word HAIRSTYLE at the bottom of our pyramid, try dropping one letter at a time as you work your way up, so that the remaining letters, at each level, spell out a new word. The following helpful hints are in ascending order, beginning with HAIRSTYLE.

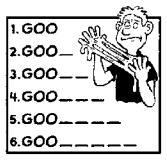
1. The design of a coiffure.
2. Excessive fear or panic.
3. To do things more hurriedly.
4. An old card game.
5. A wide-eyed gaze.
6. To burn the surface.
7. A large body of water.
8. A sailing direction.
9. Symbol for sulfur.

Answers: (from the bottom up): Hairstyle, hysteria, hastier, hearts, stare, sear, sea, SE, S.

A "NOTHING" WAGER! Bet your friends that you can add two to four and end up with nothing. When they give up, place four sticks on the table (fig.1). Now, add two more sticks as shown in fig. 2. This spells out the word "NIL" which means zero, or nothing.

DON'T GET STUCK WITH THIS ONE! In this puzzle, all of the words get progressively longer, and they all start with GOO. Some hints:

1. GOO (in place).
2. A hired thug.
3. A silly person.
4. Something sweet to eat.
5. Type of peanut candy.
6. An incompetent person.



Answers: 1. Goo. 2. Goon. 3. Goose. 4. Goodie. 5. Goobers (peanuts). 6. Goofball.

Winter pet safety at the new year

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: As a Southerner recently transplanted to the Midwest, I'm worried about how the cold weather will affect my Chihuahua, "Freddie." Will I be able to take him outside for walks?— Kylie in Chicago

DEAR KYLIE: Smaller dogs do have a harder time in bitterly cold weather, so I would carefully gauge when and how often Freddie can go outside. Ask neighbors and friends for advice on taking dogs out in the cold. Meantime, a few basics should be followed for cold-weather pet care.

■ Make sure Freddie has a warm bed to curl up in, and that he stays well-hydrated during winter months.

■ Purchase a doggie sweater and booties and make sure Freddie wears them every time you go outside.

■ Keep him on a leash during walks, and monitor him carefully at all times.

■ If Freddie is shivering or limping, take him inside immediately, warm him up, and inspect his paws for cuts or frostbite (the frostbitten area will be colder than the rest of his paw).

■ For really cold, snowy or icy days, keep a pee pad inside for Freddie to use, and even designate an indoor "go" area if possible.

Sweaters or wraps and booties are available at local pet stores or online. For indoor eliminating, some small-dog owners actually use litter boxes. It may take a little training but can be invaluable on really cold days.

Finally, talk to Freddie's veterinarian about your concerns. He or she will have valuable advice on keeping Freddie healthy and happy as you both acclimate to the colder climate.

■ ■ ■

Send your tips, questions and comments to Paw's Corner, c/o King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475, or e-mail them to pawscorner@hotmail.com.

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Strange BUT TRUE

By Samantha Weaver

■ It was 19th-century German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer who made the following sage observation: "If we were not all so interested in ourselves, life would be so uninteresting that none of us would be able to endure it."

■ Emmy-nominated actress Debbie Reynolds was fired by Warner Brothers after her first movie.

■ Sharks inspire a great deal of fear in most people. However, the keepers of statistics claim that you are much more likely to be killed by a bee than you are to be killed by a shark—50 times more likely, in fact.

■ Growers of coffee beans say that the coffee blossom smells like jasmine.

■ When a seal goes to sleep, whether in the sea or on land, it stops breathing. Every 15 minutes or so it will wake up to take a breath, then it will go back to sleep.

■ When it comes to irrigated crops in the United States, you might be surprised to learn that the plant that covers the most acreage isn't corn, wheat or soybeans; it's grass. Think about that the next time you're watering your lawn.

■ There's an interesting story behind the name of the Caribbean island of Curacao. It seems that explorer Amerigo Vespucci had several sailors on his ship who were very seriously ill with scurvy, so he dropped them off on the island, assuming they would die. However, the abandoned sailors feasted on fresh fruit, thereby ingesting the vitamin C that cured the disease and saved their lives. The word "curacao" means "cure" in Portuguese.

■ Here's a disturbing fact for all the arachnophobes reading this: There are more than 34,000 different species of spider.

■ ■ ■

Thought for the Day: "So long as men worship the Caesars and Napoleons, Caesars and Napoleons will duly rise and make them miserable."—Aldous Huxley

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MAGIC MAZE ● PULL UP A CHAIR

S	D	A	X	U	R	P	M	J	G	D	A	X	V	S
K	N	Q	N	Y	K	I	F	D	A	X	V	T	Q	O
M	C	I	S	N	I	A	T	P	A	C	G	J	H	F
L	C	A	A	R	A	Y	W	U	R	P	N	E	N	L
J	E	H	B	W	O	F	R	O	C	K	I	N	G	D
B	O	V	E	R	S	T	U	F	F	E	D	O	Z	X
V	T	H	I	R	E	T	C	Q	O	M	L	R	K	I
H	F	D	C	W	C	D	A	E	B	H	O	H	Z	K
Y	W	V	T	A	S	R	D	O	R	G	F	T	C	Q
O	N	L	M	R	E	B	R	A	B	I	K	E	I	H
F	D	P	C	M	A	B	Z	X	L	H	D	W	V	U

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions - forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.

Arm	Camp	Easy	Overstuffed
Barber	Captain's	Folding	Rocking
Beach	Deck	High	Swivel
Boatswain's	Director's	Ladder-back	

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GO FIGURE! by Linda Thistle

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

DIFFICULTY: ★

★ Moderate ★★ Difficult
★★★ GO FIGURE!

	–		x		12
x		+		–	
	÷		+		5
–		x		x	
	x		–		23
20		21		25	

1 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

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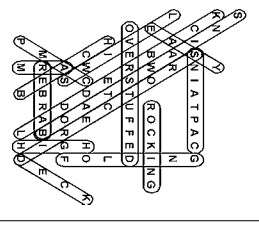
MAGIC MAZE ANSWER



GO FIGURE ANSWER

3	–	1	x	6	12
x	+		+		x
8	÷	2	+	1	5
4	x	7	–	5	23
–	x		x		
20		21		25	

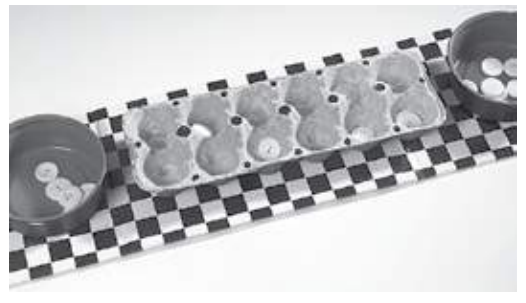
Play an African game for Kwanzaa

Turn off the TV and other multimedia distractions, and enjoy a game night with your kids. If you celebrate Kwanzaa the week after Christmas, introduce school-age kids and friends to an African game commonly called Mancala, also known as Kisolo in the Republic of Congo, where I taught school.

Here's how to make and play this lively and easy to learn game:

Make it:

Cut the lid off of a standard dozen-size cardboard egg carton and save the bottom. Make two collection boxes, 2 inches high, by cutting off the tops of two cardboard milk cartons. Or, use two small plastic deli containers in the shape of small bowls.



Paint all three pieces with acrylic paints in bright colors. Let dry.

Cut a 6-inch-by-18-inch sheet of cardboard or poster board. Center the egg carton on top, place a collection box at each end and glue the three objects in place. Decorate with adhesive-backed paper, paint and stickers. Fill each egg-carton bin with four tokens, such as buttons or large beans.

Play it:

Sit across from your opponent and place the game between the two of you so that your collection box is to your right and your opponent's box is to your left. The object of the game is to collect the most tokens in your collection box.

The youngest player can go first. Play begins by picking up all tokens in any one bin on your side of the game, which is the row facing you. Place a token in the bin to the right of the empty bin and continue dropping tokens one by one counterclockwise. If you reach your collection box, drop a token in the box and continue to your opponent's side until all tokens in your hand are distributed. Do not drop a token in your opponent's box.

Gain an extra turn when the last token lands in your box. If the last token lands in an empty bin on your side of the game, take all of your opponent's tokens from his bin opposite your empty bin. Place his tokens in your box.

Your opponent resumes play. When bins from one side of the game are empty, the game stops. Count tokens in boxes.

"The grandkids are coming!" tip: Teach a favorite card or board game to your grandkids and share memories of things you did for fun when you were their ages.

■ ■ ■

Donna Erickson's award-winning television series "Donna's Day" airs on public television nationwide. Visit www.donnasday.com to find out when it airs on your local PBS station and to sign up for Donna's e-newsletter.

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Life & Style

Clooney, Streep, Bullock among SAG Awards noms

LOS ANGELES (AP)—"Up in the Air," "Precious" and "Inglourious Basterds" led the Screen Actors Guild Awards with three nominations each Thursday, among them honors for George Clooney, Diane Kruger and Mo'Nique.

The World War II rewrite "Inglourious Basterds" and the Harlem story "Precious: Based on the Novel `Push' By Sapphire" are competing for the guild's overall cast prize, along with the 1960s British drama "An Education," the Iraq War tale "The Hurt Locker" and the musical "Nine."

The corporate-downsizing tale "Up in the Air" was shut out of that category but scored a lead-actor nomination for Clooney as a frequent-flyer whiz and two supporting-actress slots, for Vera Farmiga as his new love and Anna Kendrick as his new protege.

Kruger picked up a supporting-actress honor as a German movie star and Allied spy in "Inglourious Basterds," which also earned a supporting-actor slot for Christoph Waltz as an exuberantly ruthless Nazi.

"Precious" earned a lead-actress honor for Gabourey Sidibe as an illiterate, abused teen determined to make a better life. Mo'Nique was nominated as supporting actress as the teen's despicable mother.

For best actor, Clooney is up against Jeff Bridges as a boozy country singer in "Crazy Heart," Colin Firth as a grieving gay academic in "A Single Man," Morgan Freeman as Nelson Mandela in "Invictus" and Jeremy Renner as a daredevil bomb technician in "The Hurt Locker."

Along with Sidibe, nominated for best actress are Sandra Bullock as foster mom for a future NFL star in "The Blind Side,"

AP

Actors Michelle Monaghan, left, and Chris O'Donnell announce Meryl Streep of the film "Julie & Julia" as a nominee for Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Leading Role for the 16th Annual Screen Actors Guild Awards, Thursday, Dec. 17, 2009, in West Hollywood, Calif. The show will be held on January 23 in Los Angeles.

Helen Mirren as the wife of Leo Tolstoy in "The Last Station," Carey Mulligan as a teen involved with an older man in "An Education," and Meryl Streep as chef Julia Child in "Julie & Julia."

Penelope Cruz joined Farmiga, Kendrick, Kruger and Mo'Nique in the supporting-actress field, playing a filmmaker's needy mistress in "Nine."

Besides Waltz, supporting-actor picks are Matt Damon as a South Africa rugby player in "Invictus," Woody Harrelson as a military next-of-kin notifier in "The Messenger," Christopher Plummer as aging author Tolstoy in "The Last Station" and Stanley Tucci as a serial killer in "The Lovely Bones."

The choices lined up much the same as Tuesday's Golden Globe nominations. A few notable differences: SAG pick Renner missed out at the Globes, which favored Tobey Maguire for another war-on-terror tale, "Brothers"; Kruger helped announce Globe nominations but was not selected herself, Julianne Moore making the Globe supporting-actress cut for "A Single Man"; Emily Blunt, a dramatic-actress nominee at the Globes for "The Young Victoria," was snubbed by SAG.

Television nominees included familiar names, comedy-series actress Tina Fey and actor Alec Baldwin of "30 Rock," which also had a nomination for overall cast. The show won all three SAG comedy categories last year. Baldwin has won the comedy-show actor prize the last three years, while Fey has won for actress the last two.

Other TV comedies nominated for best cast are "Curb Your Enthusiasm," "Glee," "Modern Family" and "The Office."

Last year's drama cast winner, "Mad Men," is nominated again, along with "The Closer, "Dexter," "The Good Wife" and "True Blood."

The SAG Awards will be handed out Jan. 23.

The guild prizes are a prelude for what actors might take home at the Academy Awards. Three of the four guild recipients last year—Sean Penn for "Milk," Heath Ledger for "The Dark Knight" and Kate Winslet for "The Reader"—went on to win Oscars. Most members of the academy's acting branch are also members of SAG.

"Slumdog Millionaire," which earned the guild's cast honor, wound up dominating at the Oscars, winning best picture and other key awards.

Film and TV nominees were chosen by two groups of 2,100 people each, randomly chosen from the guild's roughly 100,000 members. The guild's full membership is eligible to vote for winners.

The show will include the guild's life-achievement award for Betty White.

Downey turns supersleuth in 'Sherlock Holmes'

By JILL LAWLESS
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

LONDON (AP)—Robert Downey Jr. is an actor at the top of his game—already a big-screen superhero, now an iconic super-sleuth.

He's also surprisingly open about his self-doubt.

A charismatic performer with a sometimes troubled past, Downey struck box-office gold with 2008 hit, "Iron Man," and now plays the great Victorian detective in Guy Ritchie's action-filled "Sherlock Holmes." He knows he's not many people's mental image of the angular, cerebral and very British Holmes. He hasn't let it stop him.

"You kind of act as if you're up to the task until you find out whether you truly are or not," said Downey, in reflective mood during an interview in London.

"I was fortunate that right about this time last year I was really peaking in my own confidence and faith in my abilities. And seeing as I'd been cast and contracted and it was moving forward, it wasn't like there was any benefit to me not thinking I was the perfect guy for it."

Audiences will soon give their verdict on Downey's muscular, street-wise take on the sleuth of Baker Street. The film has its world premiere in London on Monday and opens in the United States on Dec. 25.

Ritchie said Downey was "one of the few American actors" he could imagine as Holmes.

"His English accent is almost flawless. He just seems like the perfect guy." And like Holmes, "his mind works at a speed I can't keep up with."

Downey's detective is not the lanky, languid, deerstalker hat-sporting Holmes of previous screen interpretations. This, after all, is a movie by the director of Cockney gangster-geezer romps "Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels," ''Snatch" and "Rockn-Rolla."

When not battling baddies with stick fighting and martial arts, Holmes relaxes with a bit of bare-knuckle boxing. Trusty sidekick Dr. Watson, played by Jude Law, is a wounded Afghan war veteran with a gambling habit and an eye for the ladies.

AP

Actors Jude Law and Robert Downey Jr. attend the premiere of "Sherlock Holmes" at Lincoln Center in New York, on Thursday, Dec. 17, 2009.

Travesty? Actually, it's surprisingly faithful to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's original descriptions of Holmes in stories that began appearing in 1887.

"Oftentimes the innovative thing to do is to be truer to the source material," said Downey during an interview in the slightly spooky setting of London's Freemasons' Hall—a nod to the powerful secret society at the heart of the film's criminal conspiracy. Room after room in the cavernous building holds heavy wooden chairs and mysterious objects, all watched over by oil paintings of past Masonic luminaries.

Downey said he was drawn to Ritchie's take on Holmes as "the first modern martial artist."

"I thought, that's just a fresh way to go."

Conan Doyle fans, who might have feared blasphemy, will find many of the stories' main ingredients present and correct. There's a glimpse of Holmes' criminal nemesis Professor Moriarty, a meaty role for Scotland Yard detective Inspector Lestrade (Eddie Marsan), and a romantic frisson in the form of Irene Adler (Rachel McAdams), the only woman ever to get past the detective's defenses.

At the same time, Downey is the most physical Holmes on film. Ritchie offers up chases, fights and explosions aplenty as Holmes and Watson race to stop an occult conspiracy involving the murderous Lord Blackwood (a menacing Mark Strong) and a secret brotherhood that includes some of Britain's most powerful people.

It's an action romp with a big dose of bromance—Holmes and Watson spar and bicker like a married couple. Holmes' periods of gloom and his drug habit—Conan Doyle's hero staves off boredom with a seven-percent solution of cocaine in water—are only hinted at.

Downey can relate to Holmes. His own career has been marked by restlessness, from the Academy Award-nominated promise of films like "Chaplin" through well-documented drug troubles that saw him do stints of prison, rehab and probation.

Downey says that unlike Holmes, he didn't turn to drugs through boredom.

"That was never really my relationship," he said tersely.

But he acknowledges an affinity with the great detective.

"I don't know that I would be satisfied with anything," he said. "My neutral gear is dissatisfaction. In that way I can really relate to Holmes, because he rebels at stagnation."

Downey's drug and legal troubles ended in 2002, and the last few years have seen a spectacular renaissance. "Iron Man" was followed by a best supporting actor Oscar nomination for "Tropic Thunder"—a rare awards nod for a broad comedy.

"Iron Man 2" is due for release next year, and it seems inevitable there will be a "Sherlock Holmes" sequel.

Downey said recently that he'd be happy to play Holmes and "Iron Man" hero Tony Stark for the rest of his career—but that sort of routine seems unlikely.

He says that at 44, his career is finally where he wants it to be.

"I'm in an arena of activity where I get to work with people I would choose to work with, given my druthers," he said. "I think oftentimes before that was the missing component.

"It's a little bit naive on my part, but I always feel like when I'm doing a movie I'm supposed to develop a deep bond with the director so he or she and I can create this third thing, which is the character. And that definitely happened with Guy."

AP

In this June 7, 2009 file photo, actress Anne Hathaway arrives at the 63rd Annual Tony Awards in New York.

Paparazzo crashes bike into Anne Hathaway's car

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Authorities say a paparazzo has crashed his bicycle into actress Anne Hathaway's car in West Hollywood. No one was seriously injured.

Los Angeles County sheriff's spokesman Steve Whitmore said Thursday the unidentified cyclist ran into Hathaway's car on Wednesday as the car made a right turn.

The Oscar-nominated star was a passenger in her black Audi being driven by her boyfriend Adam Shulman.

Whitmore says investigators determined the rider was a paparazzo because he was carrying a camera with a long lens.

Witnesses told deputies he was traveling fast but there was enough time for him to avoid the crash.

Whitmore says the paparazzo was at fault but no arrests were made.

Rep: Melanie Griffith had skin cancer surgery

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A representative for Melanie Griffith says the actress has had surgery to remove early stages of skin cancer from her face.

Spokeswoman Robin Baum said Thursday the procedure was done early enough to prevent further complications.

The 52-year-old Griffith was left with a black eye after the surgery.

The "Working Girl" star has a 12-year-old daughter with her husband, actor Antonio Banderas. Griffith also has an adult son and daughter from previous relationships.

She is set to appear on an episode of TV's "Nip/Tuck" next year.

UK officials put restrictions on Guy Ritchie's pub

LONDON (AP)—Officials in a London neighborhood have a message for the celebrity patrons who flock to Guy Ritchie's watering hole: Take it inside.

Residents of west London's wealthy Mayfair neighborhood complained that the 41-year-old filmmaker had transformed The Punch Bowl from a pleasant 18th century Georgian pub into a loud and paparazzi-plagued celebrity hangout.

The City of Westminster Council, which regulates the area's drinking establishments, ordered Ritchie and his co-proprietors Thursday to keep patrons indoors after 8 p.m. and to scale down their private parties. Employees have also been told to make hourly checks outside for glasses and litter.

"We are absolutely not against pubs," Ward Councilor Glenys Roberts told a committee convened to consider action against the pub. "We are not even against The Punch Bowl except that it has changed dramatically in its nature."

Ritchie, who wrote and directed "Snatch" and "Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels," took over The Punch Bowl in early 2008 along with business partners Piers Adam and Guy Pelly. He and his then-wife Madonna were the venue's most famous regulars.

The refurbished pub has since drawn a stream of stars, but residents have complained about noisy crowds, traffic jams, trash and public urination.

Ashanti's mom says crazed fan terrorized her

NEW YORK (AP)—A fan obsessed with R&B star Ashanti composed a barrage of creepy text messages detailing his lewd fantasies about the multiplatinum-selling singer, her mother testified Thursday at the man's trial.

Tina Douglas told a Manhattan jury that Devard Hurd also attached photos of male genitals to some of the more than 30 rambling text messages sent to her cell phone over several weeks earlier this year.

"It was just disgusting and humiliating and extremely frightening," Douglas said.

Hurd, a gym worker from Indiana, was arrested in July on charges of stalking and harassment after ignoring repeated warnings by Ashanti's family to stop trying to contact her through her mother, Assistant District Attorney Carolina Holderness said in opening statements.

"The defendant refused to listen," the prosecutor said. "The messages became more personal and more offensive."

Defense attorney Richard Verchick said Hurd was misunderstood.

"Sending pictures and texts is not crime," he said. "The intent was never to harass Tina or Ashanti. ... What he wanted was what we all want in life—love."

ENTERTAINMENT TIDBITS

De Niro, DiCaprio to fete Scorsese at Globes

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Robert De Niro and Leonardo DiCaprio are set to celebrate Martin Scorsese at next month's Golden Globe Awards. The two actors and longtime Scorsese collaborators will present the director with the Cecil B. DeMille Award at the 67th annual Globes ceremony. The DeMille award recognizes outstanding contributions to entertainment. Past winners include last year's recipient, Steven Spielberg, along with Warren Beatty, Anthony Hopkins and Michael Douglas. The Golden Globe Awards will be presented Jan. 17 at the Beverly Hilton Hotel and broadcast live on NBC.

Shalhoub heading to Broadway in 'Lend Me a Tenor'

NEW YORK (AP)—From "Monk" to madcap. Tony Shalhoub will co-star with Anthony LaPaglia in a Broadway revival of "Lend Me a Tenor," Ken Ludwig's screwball comedy about a missing opera star and the frantic attempt to cover up his absence. Producer Stuart Thompson says the comedy will open April 4 at the Music Box Theatre, with preview performances beginning March 11. It was first seen on Broadway in 1989. Shalhoub recently completed his final season of the television series "Monk," while LaPaglia starred in the canceled CBS drama "Without a Trace." "Lend Me a Tenor" will have an equally starry director: actor Stanley Tucci, who has roles in two of the year's more prominent films, "Julie & Julia" and "The Lovely Bones."

'Big Brother 9' winner released to drug treatment

BOSTON (AP)—The winner of the CBS reality show "Big Brother 9," who's accused of attempting to sell drugs, has been released for inpatient substance abuse treatment after posting bail. Adam Jasinski has pleaded not guilty to a charge of attempting to sell 2,000 pills of oxycodone, the main active ingredient in OxyContin and other painkillers. The Delray Beach, Fla., resident allegedly told a federal agent he'd been selling thousands of pills monthly in Florida, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The U.S. Attorney's office said Thursday that Jasinki's parents have agreed to be responsible for him as he receives the treatment as a condition of his release.

Loretta Lynn feels 'great,' is recovering from flu

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—Country music legend Loretta Lynn is "feeling great" and planning a trip to her home in the Bahamas over the holidays, according to her daughter Patsy Lynn Russell. Reports have circulated on the Web about Lynn's declining health after she canceled her four remaining shows this year because of the flu. Russell says Lynn will return to the U.S. in late January to resume touring.

She will head to Los Angeles at the end of January to receive her Lifetime Achievement Grammy from the Recording Academy. Other honorees at the Jan. 30 ceremony include Michael Jackson, Leonard Cohen, Bobby Darin, Andre Previn, and Clark Terry. They will also be recognized during the Grammys on Jan. 31, airing live on CBS.

Nancy O'Dell says goodbye to 'Access Hollywood'

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Nancy O'Dell says she is leaving "Access Hollywood."

The entertainment reporter said Thursday she will wrap up her 13-year run on the NBC show this week. Publicist Annie Jeeves says O'Dell is pursuing a new opportunity but did not elaborate. O'Dell has been a reporter on "Access Hollywood" since the show began in 1996. She has also played a reporter on several TV shows and appeared as a contestant on "Dancing With the Stars." O'Dell says she will still host NBC's coverage of the Tournament of Roses parade on New Year's Day.

Tony Goldwyn joins Broadway's 'Promises, Promises'

NEW YORK (AP)—Tony Goldwyn is being added to the cast of the upcoming Broadway revival of "Promises, Promises," opening next spring. Producer John Gore says Goldwyn will join Sean Hayes and Kristin Chenoweth in the musical, which is based on the Academy Award-winning movie "The Apartment." Previews begin March 27 at the Broadway Theatre, with an opening set for April 25. "Promises, Promises" features a book by Neil Simon and a score by Burt Bacharach and Hal David. The musical will be directed and choreographed by Rob Ashford. Goldwyn is best known for the movie "Ghost" and has directed such television series as "Dexter," "Grey's Anatomy" and "Private Practice."

Word is out: Rudolph's red nose may just be makeup

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: With the holidays here, songs about Santa and his reindeer are filling the air. I'm writing to talk about reindeer antlers. Reindeer are unique because they are the only members of the deer family in which both genders have antlers, which are made of bone and grown annually.

In the summer and fall, you cannot identify a reindeer as a "he" or a "she" without further investigation. In late December, however, only the females still have their antlers.

During the summer months, the males use their antlers to attract females and defend their harem (anywhere from five to 15 females) from other males. When they are no longer "looking for love," the males lose their antlers. The females, on the other hand, keep theirs through the winter and into the spring, and use them to compete for food and to protect their young.

The only reindeer with antlers at Christmastime are the GIRLS, Abby. So Rudolph would have been appropriately named "Rudolphia," and the other reindeer would have been laughing and calling HER names until the glow from HER nose guided Santa's sleigh that foggy Christmas eve.

JOYCE CAMPBELL, PH.D.

DEAR DR. CAMPBELL: Fascinating. This clearly explains why Santa doesn't get lost at Christmas. Females are never reluctant to ask for directions ... ho, ho, ho.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: I demonstrate products in a supermarket. It isn't easy, and sometimes I feel like I'm between a rock and a hard place.

Will you please tell parents that if we do not give their children samples of food, it is for their own good. We don't know what kind of food allergies their children may have. The company I work for will fire us if we give samples to children without a parent first giving permission.

TRYING HARD IN TULSA, OKLA.

DEAR TRYING HARD: You have my sympathy, and I'm pleased to pass along your message. I recently read that food allergies among children are on the rise, and that 4 percent of kids today suffer from one. The policy your company is enforcing is for everyone's protection and should not be misinterpreted. It's in place so that no one's little angel gets sick or has an allergic reaction.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: A few months ago, my husband and I were visiting a remote area in the mountains. We were on a narrow, winding road with no shoulder and a guardrail on one side. There was traffic in both directions. As we ambled along, we heard a siren. An ambulance came up behind us and rode our tail, blasting the horn, obviously urging us to let him by.

Although we looked and looked, we could not find a safe place to pull over for several minutes. When we finally did find a space to pull into, the crew threw us dirty looks as they drove by.

I hate to think we endangered someone's life or made the EMTs' job more difficult, but it seemed equally dangerous for us to move into a lane of oncoming traffic. What is the proper etiquette for this type of situation?

RACHAEL IN ATLANTA

DEAR RACHAEL: When approached by a vehicle with a siren and a flashing red light, a driver should pull as far to the right as possible and stop. Because there was no place for you to pull over, you should have done exactly what you did—which was to proceed at a safe rate of speed until you found one.

■■■

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

HI CALVIN. ARE YOU BRINGING YOUR STUFFED TIGER TO SCHOOL TODAY?
NO, HE'S JUST KEEPING ME COMPANY WHILE I WAIT FOR THE BUS.
OH.
BUT ACTUALLY, HE'S BEEN NOTHING BUT TROUBLE TODAY. HE'S TRYING TO SABOTAGE MY CHRISTMAS BY MAKING ME BE BAD INSTEAD OF GOOD.
© 1989 Universal Press Syndicate
FORTUNATELY, I ASKED SANTA FOR SUCH GREAT PRESENTS THAT I CAN WITHSTAND ANY TEMPTATION. I'M BEING AN ABSOLUTE ANGEL.
WHAT DID YOU ASK FOR?
A HEAT-SEEKING GUIDED MISSILE. I FIGURE FIVE MINUTES WITH ONE OF THOSE BABIES WILL MAKE UP FOR THIS WHOLE ROTTEN MONTH.
12-19

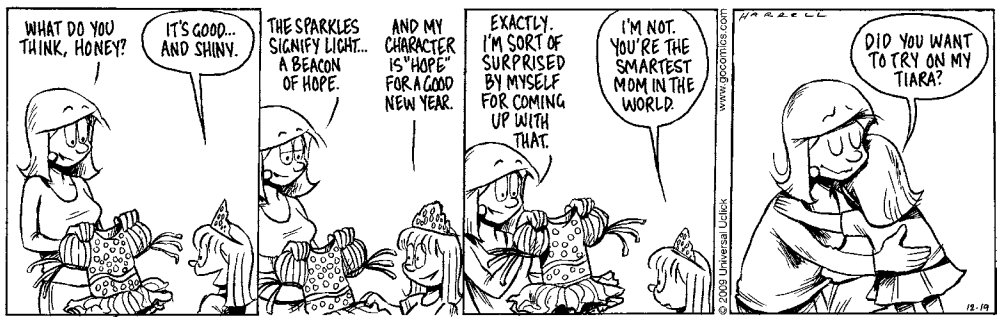
Garfield®

By Jim Davis

MRS. FEENY WISHED ME A MERRY CHRISTMAS TODAY!
© 2009 PAWS, INC. All Rights Reserved
JIM DAVIS 12-19
www.garfield.com
Distributed by Universal Press Syndicate
SHE'S UP TO SOMETHING, ISN'T SHE?
BENEATH THAT CHINTZ HOUSECOAT BEATS A HEART OF PURE EVIL

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


WHAT DO YOU THINK, HONEY?
IT'S GOOD... AND SHINY.
THE SPARKLES SIGNIFY LIGHT... A BEACON OF HOPE.
AND MY CHARACTER IS "HOPE" FOR A GOOD NEW YEAR.
EXACTLY. I'M SORT OF SURPRISED BY MYSELF FOR COMING UP WITH THAT.
I'M NOT. YOU'RE THE SMARTEST MOM IN THE WORLD.
© 2009 Universal Uclick
www.gocomics.com
MARRELL
DID YOU WANT TO TRY ON MY TIARA?
12-19

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

'TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS AND ALL THROUGH THE HOUSE...
The Night before Christmas
www.gocomics.com
Glenn McCoy
NOT A CREATURE WAS STIRRING, NOT EVEN... UH... UH...
KLINK KLINK KLINK
HEY, WOULD YOU MIND STIRRING YOUR OVALTINE SOMEWHERE ELSE?!
OH, SORRY.
© 2009 Glenn McCoy/Dist. by Universal Uclick

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

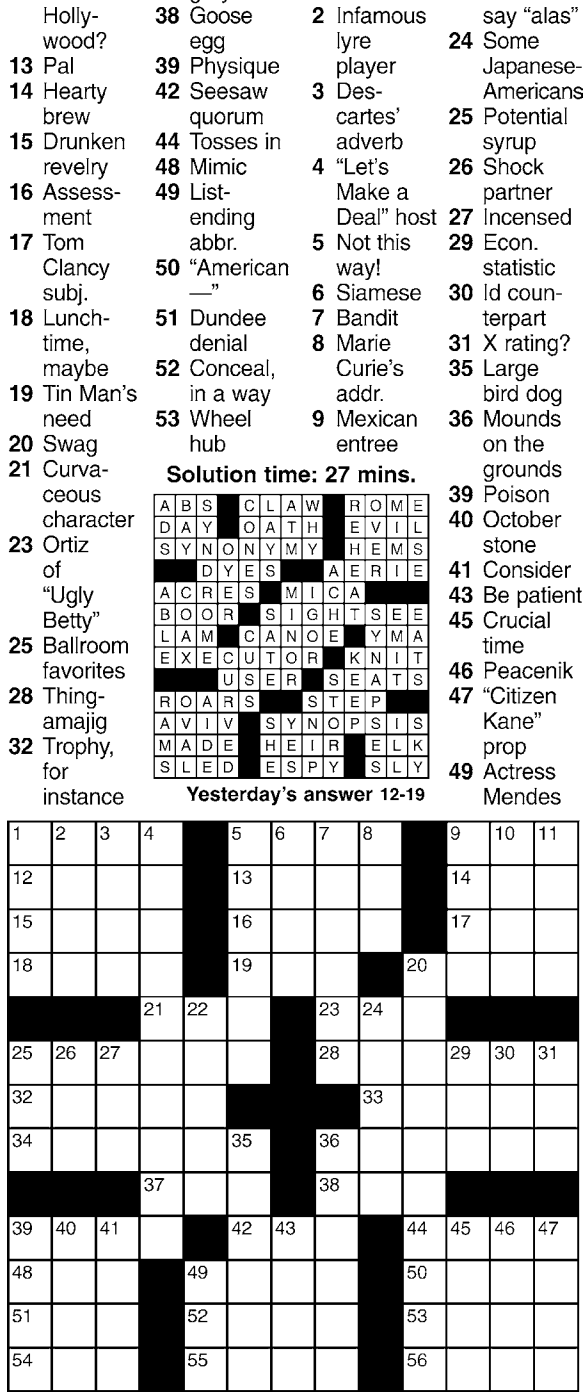
ACROSS
1 From square one
5 Molecule part
9 Singer Waits
12 Miles in Hollywood?
13 Pal
14 Hearty brew
15 Drunken revelry
16 Assessment
17 Tom Clancy subj.
18 Lunchtime, maybe
19 Tin Man's need
20 Swag
21 Curvaceous character
23 Ortiz of "Ugly Betty"
25 Ballroom favorites
28 Thingamajig
32 Trophy, for instance
33 "Riders to the Sea" dramatist
34 Partakes in the Tour de France
36 Persist
37 Hide the gray
38 Goose egg
39 Physique
42 Seesaw quorum
44 Tosses in
48 Mimic
49 Listending abbr.
50 "American —"
51 Dundee denial
52 Conceal, in a way
53 Wheel hub
54 Freddy's street
55 — and crafts
56 Watched

DOWN
1 Shakespeare's river
2 Infamous lyre player
3 Descartes' adverb
4 "Let's Make a Deal" host
5 Not this way!
6 Siamese
7 Bandit
8 Marie Curie's addr.
9 Mexican entree
10 Medley
11 9-Down ingredient, often
20 Puppet in Mr. Rogers' neighborhood
22 How to say "alas"
24 Some Japanese-Americans
25 Potential syrup
26 Shock partner
27 Incensed
29 Econ. statistic
30 Id counterpart
31 X rating?
35 Large bird dog
36 Mounds on the grounds
39 Poison
40 October stone
41 Consider
43 Be patient
45 Crucial time
46 Peacenik
47 "Citizen Kane" prop
49 Actress Mendes

Solution time: 27 mins.

A	B	S	■	C	L	A	W	■	R	O	M	E
D	A	Y	■	O	A	T	H	■	E	V	I	L
S	Y	N	O	N	Y	M	Y	■	H	E	M	S
■	■	D	Y	E	S	■	■	A	E	R	I	E
A	C	R	E	S	■	M	I	C	A	■	■	■
B	O	O	R	■	S	I	G	H	T	S	E	E
L	A	M	■	C	A	N	O	E	■	Y	M	A
E	X	E	C	U	T	O	R	■	K	N	I	T
■	■	■	U	S	E	R	■	S	E	A	T	S
R	O	A	R	S	■	■	S	T	E	P	■	■
A	V	I	V	■	S	Y	N	O	P	S	I	S
M	A	D	E	■	H	E	I	R	■	E	L	K
S	L	E	D	■	E	S	P	Y	■	S	L	Y

Yesterday's answer 12-19



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Marla Sokoloff, 29; Alyssa Milano, 37; Amy Locane, 38; Jessica Steen, 44

Happy Birthday: You will play hard and work hard, bringing spectacular results this year. It's time to blend your past experience with your present plans in order to build a bigger and better future. Change is upon you and your ability to adapt and make the most of every situation will put you out in front. The rewards for your labor will be massive. Your numbers are 5, 9, 17, 21, 32, 41, 44

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Your input will help to create a stir that helps you make a profit using your abilities. Travel and communications will lead to greater opportunities and will inject a little fire into your love life. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Last-minute details added to a job you've been working on will make a huge difference. A budget set for entertainment and festive activities will help you stay within your means, giving a better start to the new year. ✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Tie up any last-minute jobs so you can spend the rest of the day relaxing and enjoying the people and activities that make you happiest. A choice can be made that will alter your plans for the future. A move will entice you but may be premature. ✪✪✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): What you do for those in need will determine what you will get back in the new year. Don't let the changes being made around you cause you to make an unnecessary move. Your patience will pay off. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): The people you hook up with will have some interesting alternatives for you to think about. Changing your location or traveling a distance will not satisfy your expectations. Stay put and spend less. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): You can find an easy way to handle a family member who is out of line or causing you grief. You don't have to show anger but you do have to be firm. Some last-minute items you pick up are sure to please. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Don't count on getting help from anyone. If you prepare to do everything yourself, you won't be disappointed. Your originality, charm and sophistication will be all that's required to drum up interest in something you want to pursue. ✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Don't sit idle when you should be picking up additional information, experience and skills. Mix tradition with non-traditional methods. A change is possible if you follow through with your plans. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Put your ideas and plans on the table, presenting your skills and your experience. You'll be difficult to turn down if you have a slick presentation. Once you have made it, you can relax and enjoy the holidays. ✪✪✪✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): You will make an impact with something you do or give to someone. A problem with someone in a position of authority will fester if you don't handle the situation as soon as it develops. Accept change. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Share your thoughts and feelings and you will feel less stressed about your current situation and your future. A relationship that means a lot to you is in the stars and will allow you to make some interesting changes to the way you live your life. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Look inward and you will discover what it is you need and want from the people around you. It's sharing equally that leads to a solid and prosperous personal or professional relationship. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You have staying power and are clever, intense and ambitious. You have great insight and will change your direction on a whim if it suits you.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations,* ***myspace.com/eugenialast*** *for Eugenia's blog,* ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	2						7	
3		8	5		6	1		2
			7		2			
4								5
				9				
7								8
			6		4			
6		2	8		5	4		7
	5						1	

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 12/19

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

3	4	1	2	5	6	8	9	7
5	7	6	1	9	8	4	2	3
9	8	2	7	3	4	5	1	6
7	2	8	3	6	9	1	4	5
1	3	5	4	8	2	7	6	9
4	6	9	5	1	7	3	8	2
8	5	4	9	2	3	6	7	1
2	1	7	6	4	5	9	3	8
6	9	3	8	7	1	2	5	4

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 12/18

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

GREAT RADIO DJs **Solution: 6 letters**

E	R	S	W	O	H	S	N	E	V	E	T	S	M	B
E	A	O	L	U	O	S	R	E	N	E	T	S	I	L
F	J	G	M	O	C	I	S	U	M	A	Y	N	C	P
O	P	O	G	U	T	C	C	I	T	N	G	A	R	E
R	L	I	V	E	H	S	X	I	D	E	L	O	O	R
E	A	N	D	A	R	E	O	I	N	L	G	L	P	S
Q	Y	L	R	N	S	N	C	H	E	R	D	H	H	O
U	B	M	B	E	O	A	E	R	A	I	I	R	O	N
E	E	K	N	U	T	I	S	M	E	L	E	E	N	A
S	A	O	E	I	M	S	B	S	L	C	C	T	E	L
T	T	F	O	E	T	S	P	I	O	N	R	S	R	I
S	S	N	R	Y	U	I	P	R	A	O	C	A	O	T
P	E	E	L	E	N	S	D	D	S	I	Y	M	C	Y
S	E	E	D	M	E	S	A	K	T	R	A	C	K	S
F	A	M	O	U	S	D	O	Y	R	T	N	U	O	C

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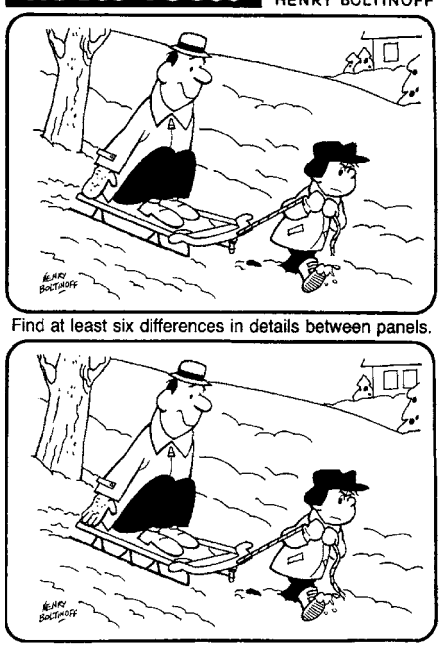
Albums, Beats, Bingenheimer, Biondi, Callers, Charm, City, Country, Dance, Dees, Famous, Freed, Host, Humor, Kasem, Listeners, Live, Master, Microphone, Mixes, Music, Oldies, Peel, Personality, Phillips, Play, Program, Record, Reggae, Requests, Rock, Rofe, Rosko, Show, Slot, Soul, Spin, Station, Stern, Stevens, Stone, Style, Syndication, Tracks, Tunes

Yesterday's Answer: Dorm

NEW FROM WONDERWORD! The Wonderword 2010 Desk Calendar is now available for pre-order on Amazon.com and Calendars.com. Search: "Wonderword Calendar." Order yours today!

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.

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Differences: 1. House has second window. 2. Man's mitten changed to glove. 3. Rope is longer. 4. Sled runner is different. 5. Tree near house is missing. 6. Tree trunk is wider.

Wishing Well®

5	4	2	4	5	4	6	2	8	6	5	7	4
C	B	A	E	O	O	H	L	V	A	N	H	R
5	6	5	3	7	3	8	6	7	6	7	6	5
G	B	E	T	A	H	A	I	V	T	E	S	N
6	7	2	4	8	3	2	6	7	5	3	5	8
I	F	L	I	L	I	O	M	U	I	N	A	U
2	6	2	3	2	8	5	2	5	3	7	2	4
W	P	F	K	O	E	L	R	F	P	N	L	G
2	5	3	6	2	5	8	7	4	5	3	2	8
E	R	O	R	I	I	F	T	I	E	S	S	R
5	7	8	2	3	2	8	7	5	8	2	5	3
N	O	I	U	I	R	E	D	D	N	E	S	T
8	7	3	8	3	6	3	7	6	4	6	4	4
D	A	I	S	V	O	E	Y	V	N	E	A	L

HERE IS A PLEASANT LITTLE GAME that will give you a message every day. It's a numerical puzzle designed to spell out your fortune. Count the letters in your first name. If the number of letters is 6 or more, subtract 4. If the number is less than 6, add 3. The result is your key number. Start at the upper left-hand corner and check one of your key numbers, left to right. Then read the message the letters under the checked figures give you.

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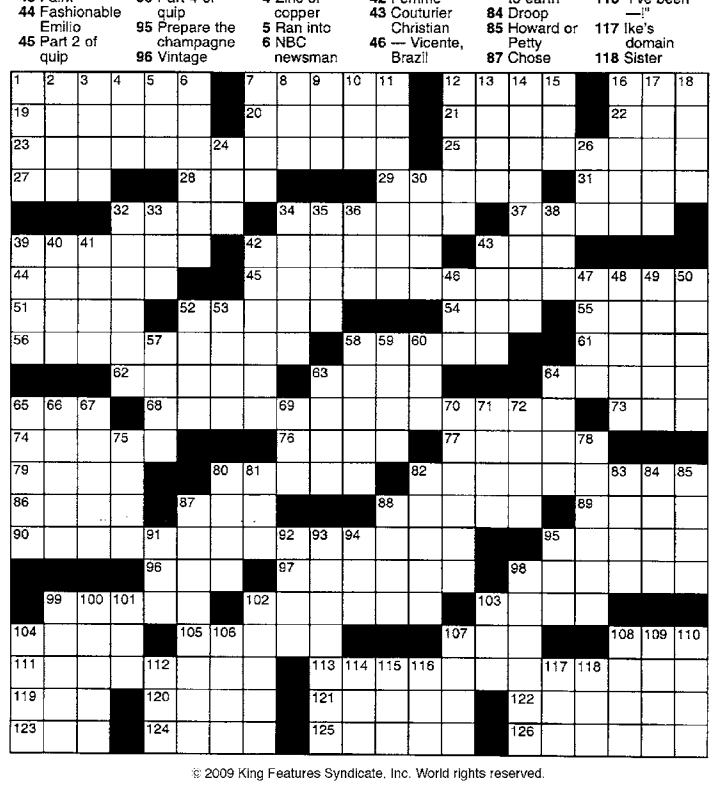
Super Crossword TOOTH PASTE

ACROSS

1 Self-confidence
7 Lady of the house
12 Pacific archipelago
16 Fit — fiddle
19 Not as affluent
20 Let up
21 "East of Eden" character
22 Negligent
23 Start of a quip by Ogden Nash
25 Massachusetts
27 "Kind — Drag" ('67 hit)
28 Little fox
29 Does some cobbling
31 Jennings or Gilels
32 "Pequod" captain
34 Whippet or wolf
37 Raptor feature
39 Dugong, for one
42 Salon offering
43 Faint
44 Fashionable Emilio
45 Part 2 of quip
51 Agatha's colleague
52 Hardly popular
54 NASA affirmative
55 — vera
56 Revolt
58 Prop for Figaro
61 Make murky
62 Alpine area
63 Soccer superstar
64 Gounod opera
65 "Fantasia" frame
68 Part 3 of quip
73 Narcs' org.
74 Old Testament character
76 Jet-setter's need
77 Spine-tingling
79 Middle Eastern money
80 Play ground?
82 Cajole
86 Cry of dread
87 — Na Na
88 Tuscan town
89 Surfeit
90 Part 4 of quip
95 Prepare the champagne
96 Vintage
97 62 Across sight
98 Grown-up grub
99 Cumin or coriander
102 Pieces
103 Noisy birds
104 Tibia
105 Walker's "The — Purple"
107 Kennel feature
108 Catchall abbr.
111 Flirt
113 End of quip
119 Burmese statesman
120 TV's "— Life"
121 Early computer
122 Pianist Jose
123 Billy — Williams
124 Scent
125 Musical movement
126 Get in shape

DOWN

1 Lhasa —
2 Magic-show sound
3 — Linda, CA
4 Zinc or copper
5 Ran into
6 NBC newsman
7 Actor Damon
8 — Dhabi
9 Historic org.
10 Had some halibut
11 Handel oratorio
12 Tale
13 "Dies —"
14 Control lever
15 Office-holders
16 Battle site of 1836
17 Fancy fabric
18 Salchow kin
24 Spare part?
26 — Aviv
30 "— in America" ('63 tune)
32 Say yes
33 — pollol
34 Proof-reader's mark
35 Sailed through
36 Tang
38 Orthopedists' org.
39 Detailed description
40 Continental currency
41 Bill of Rights grp.
42 Femme —
43 Couturier Christian
46 — Vicente, Brazil
47 Zhivago's love
48 Audibly
49 Din
50 Actress Burke
52 Long lunch?
53 Mighty mite
57 Satellite —
58 Witherspoon of "Legally Blonde"
59 Soprano Gluck
60 Zuider —
63 Bluenose
64 Move like a hummingbird
65 Chocolate substitute
66 Yale or Root
67 Inclined
69 Palindromic name
70 Most modern
71 MTV viewer
72 Precinct
75 Story line
78 Decorates glass
80 Wearing saddles
81 Author Amy
82 Places
83 Came down to earth
84 Droop
85 Howard or Petty
87 Chose
88 Bacteriologist Jonas
91 Ad — committee
92 Repeat
93 Mitty's creator
94 Harrison's "Star Wars" role
95 Dodger Ron
98 Good name for a raccoon
99 Radiated
100 Stimulate
101 Shiba — (Japanese dog)
102 Weather word
103 Roast beef au —
104 Move quickly
106 Football Hall of Famer Jim
107 Puerto —
108 To be, to Baudelaire
109 Forbidden
110 Overcharge
112 Inflatable item?
114 Lennon's widow
115 Canterbury can
116 "I've been —!"
117 Ike's domain
118 Sister



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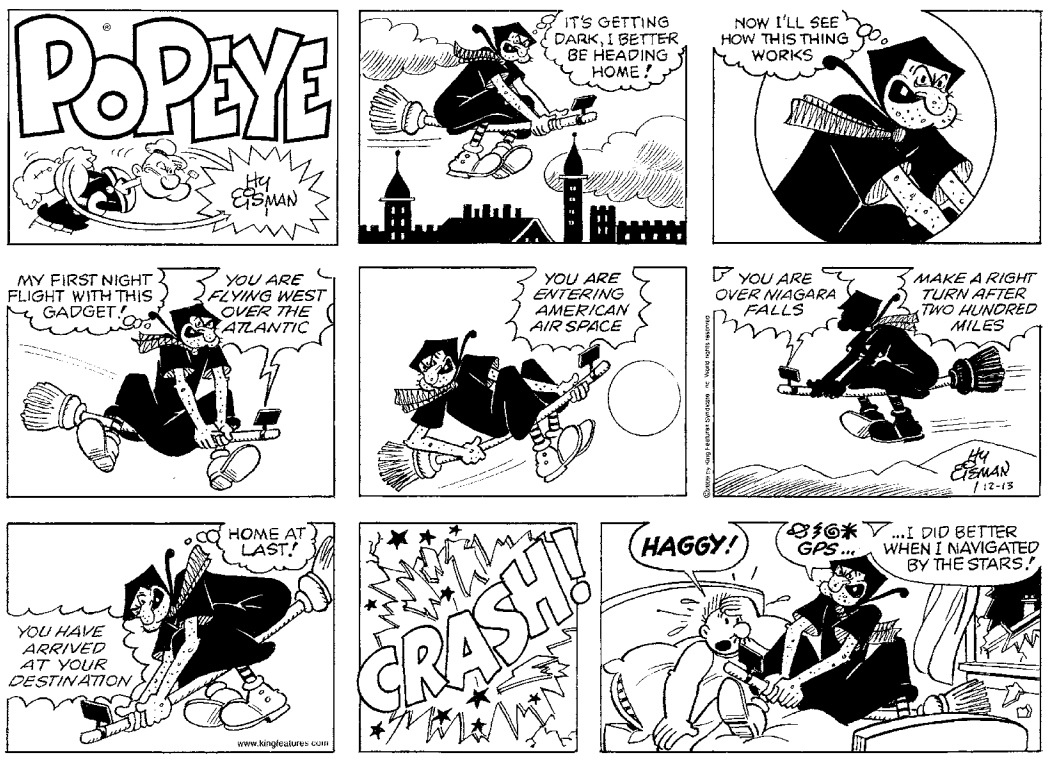
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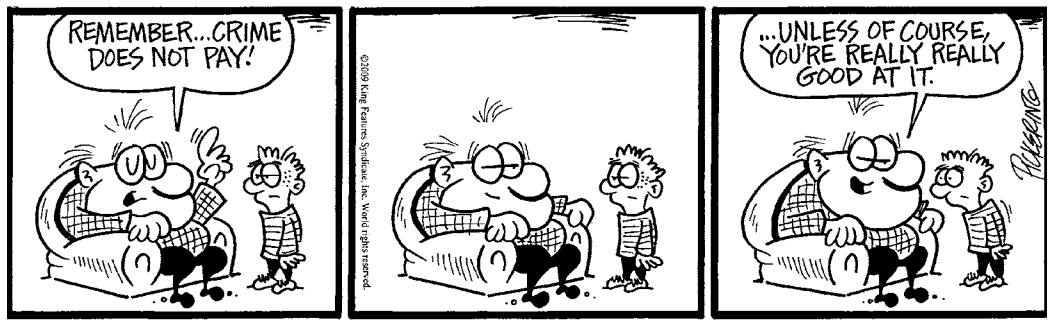
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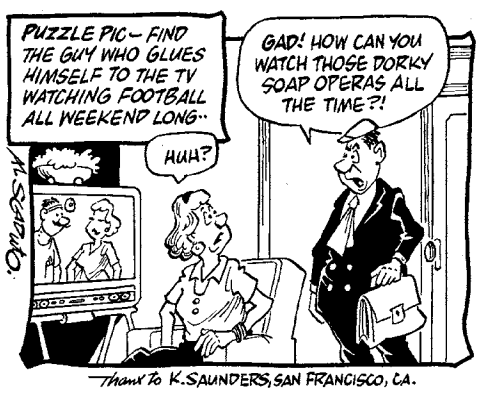
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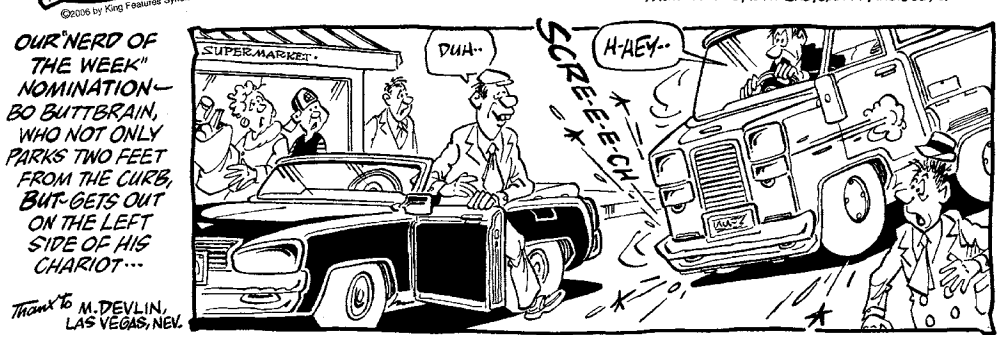
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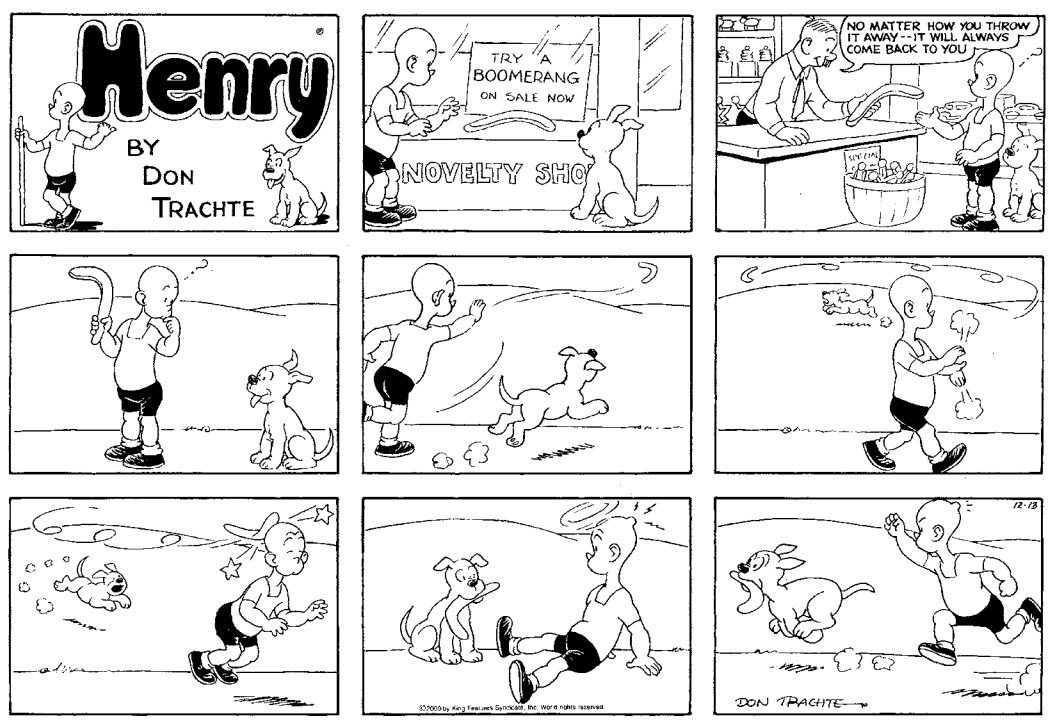
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12-13
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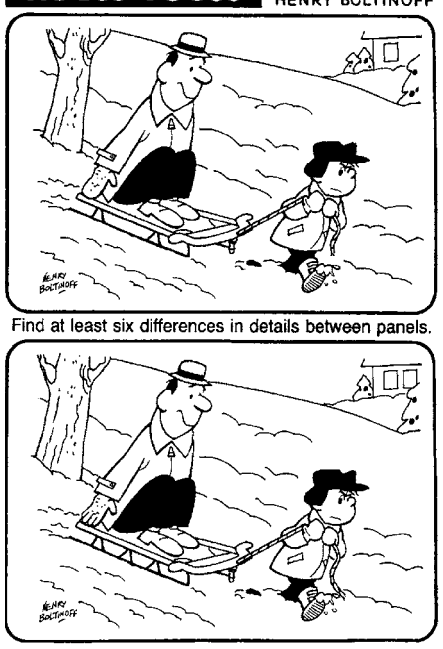
HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.

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Differences: 1. House has second window. 2. Man's mitten changed to glove. 3. Rope is longer. 4. Sled runner is different. 5. Tree near house is missing. 6. Tree trunk is wider.

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G	B	E	T	A	H	A	I	V	T	E	S	N
6	7	2	4	8	3	2	6	7	5	3	5	8
I	F	L	I	L	I	O	M	U	I	N	A	U
2	6	2	3	2	8	5	2	5	3	7	2	4
W	P	F	K	O	E	L	R	F	P	N	L	G
2	5	3	6	2	5	8	7	4	5	3	2	8
E	R	O	R	I	I	F	T	I	E	S	S	R
5	7	8	2	3	2	8	7	5	8	2	5	3
N	O	I	U	I	R	E	D	D	N	E	S	T
8	7	3	8	3	6	3	7	6	4	6	4	4
D	A	I	S	V	O	E	Y	V	N	E	A	L

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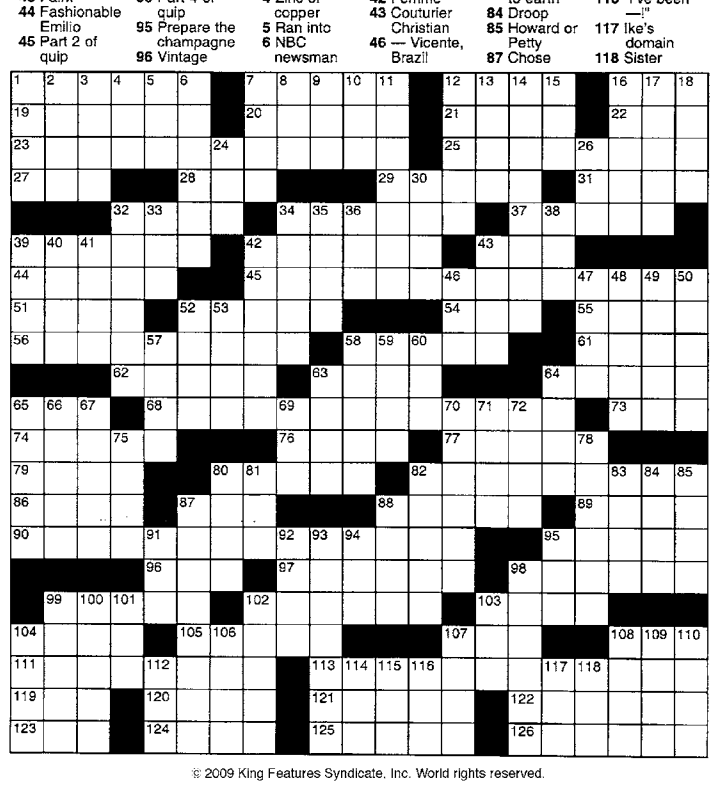
Super Crossword TOOTH PASTE

ACROSS

1 Self-confidence
7 Lady of the house
12 Pacific archipelago
16 Fit — fiddle
19 Not as affluent
20 Let up
21 "East of Eden" character
22 Negligent
23 Start of a quip by Ogden Nash
25 Massachusetts
27 "Kind — Drag" ('67 hit)
28 Little fox
29 Does some cobbling
31 Jennings or Gilels
32 "Pequod" captain
34 Whippet or wolf
37 Raptor feature
39 Dugong, for one
42 Salon offering
43 Faint
44 Fashionable Emilio
45 Part 2 of quip
51 Agatha's colleague
52 Hardly popular
54 NASA affirmative
55 — vera
56 Revolt
58 Prop for Figaro
61 Make murky
62 Alpine area
63 Soccer superstar
64 Gounod opera
65 "Fantasia" frame
68 Part 3 of quip
73 Narcs' org.
74 Old Testament character
76 Jet-setter's need
77 Spine-tingling
79 Middle Eastern money
80 Play ground?
82 Cajole
86 Cry of dread
87 — Na Na
88 Tuscan town
89 Surfeit
90 Part 4 of quip
95 Prepare the champagne
96 Vintage
97 62 Across sight
98 Grown-up grub
99 Cumin or coriander
102 Pieces
103 Noisy birds
104 Tibia
105 Walker's "The — Purple"
107 Kennel feature
108 Catchall abbr.
111 Flirt
113 End of quip
119 Burmese statesman
120 TV's "— Life"
121 Early computer
122 Pianist Jose
123 Billy — Williams
124 Scent
125 Musical movement
126 Get in shape

DOWN

1 Lhasa —
2 Magic-show sound
3 — Linda, CA
4 Zinc or copper
5 Ran into
6 NBC newsman
7 Actor Damon
8 — Dhabi
9 Historic org.
10 Had some halibut
11 Handel oratorio
12 Tale
13 "Dies —"
14 Control lever
15 Office-holders
16 Battle site of 1836
17 Fancy fabric
18 Salchow kin
24 Spare part?
26 — Aviv
30 "— in America" ('63 tune)
32 Say yes
33 — pollol
34 Proof-reader's mark
35 Sailed through
36 Tang
38 Orthopedists' org.
39 Detailed description
40 Continental currency
41 Bill of Rights grp.
42 Femme —
43 Couturier Christian
46 — Vicente, Brazil
47 Zhivago's love
48 Audibly
49 Din
50 Actress Burke
52 Long lunch?
53 Mighty mite
57 Satellite —
58 Witherspoon of "Legally Blonde"
59 Soprano Gluck
60 Zuider —
63 Bluenose
64 Move like a hummingbird
65 Chocolate substitute
66 Yale or Root
67 Inclined
69 Palindromic name
70 Most modern
71 MTV viewer
72 Precinct
75 Story line
78 Decorates glass
80 Wearing saddles
81 Author Amy
82 Places
83 Came down to earth
84 Droop
85 Howard or Petty
87 Chose
88 Bacteriologist Jonas
91 Ad — committee
92 Repeat
93 Mitty's creator
94 Harrison's "Star Wars" role
95 Dodger Ron
98 Good name for a raccoon
99 Radiated
100 Stimulate
101 Shiba — (Japanese dog)
102 Weather word
103 Roast beef au —
104 Move quickly
106 Football Hall of Famer Jim
107 Puerto —
108 To be, to Baudelaire
109 Forbidden
110 Overcharge
112 Inflatable item?
114 Lennon's widow
115 Canterbury can
116 "I've been —!"
117 Ike's domain
118 Sister



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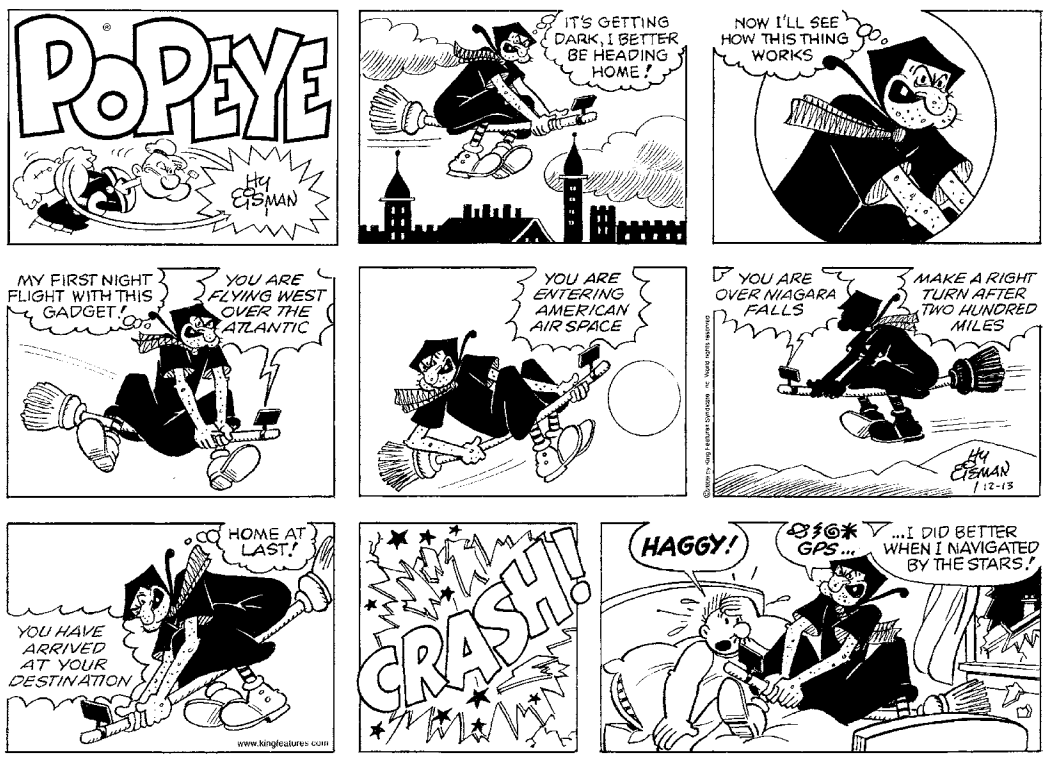
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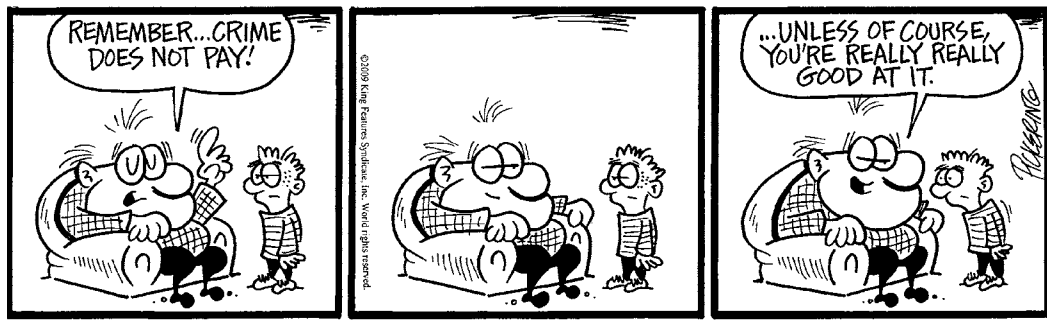
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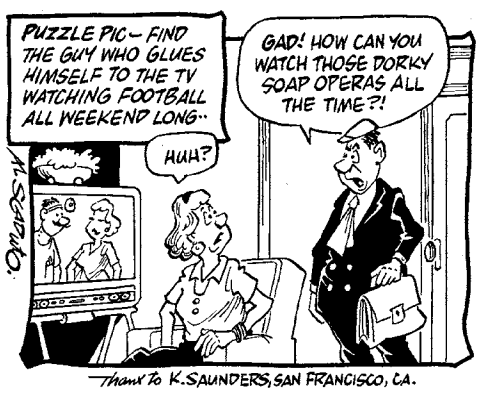
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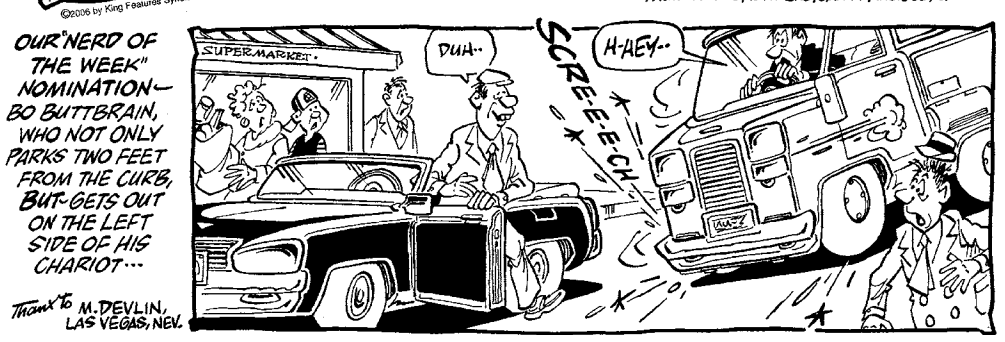
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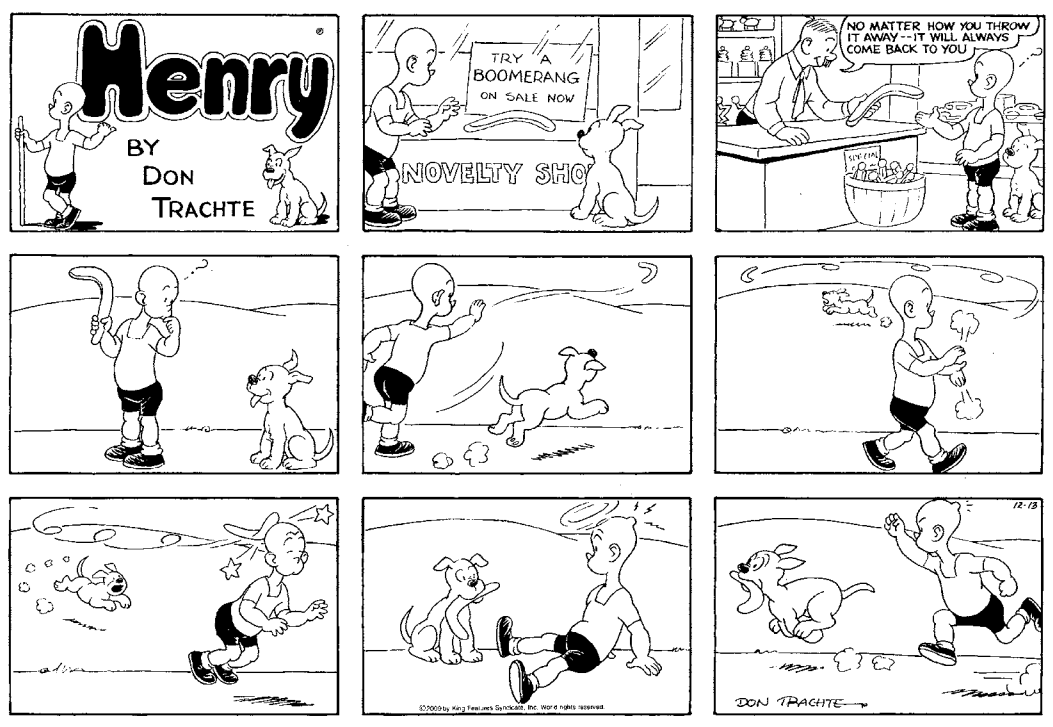
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12-13
DON TRACHTE

Bengals' Chris Henry dies day after dispute

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—Chris Henry was no stranger to trouble.

Indeed, his multiple arrests during a five-year NFL career were among the factors prompting the league to toughen its personal conduct policy.

But to hear his teammates tell it—even the team's owner—the Cincinnati Bengals receiver was determined to leave behind his troubled past and move ahead toward a bright future.

Tragically, his efforts were cut short when he died from injuries in what police said was a domestic dispute with his fiancee.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg police said the 26-year-old Henry died early Thursday, less than 18 hours after he fell off of the back of a pickup truck on a curvy residential street about eight miles northwest of downtown Charlotte.

The cause of death was not immediately released.

Henry was away from the Bengals after suffering a season-ending broken forearm in a game last month.

"We knew him in a different way than his public persona," Bengals owner Mike Brown said. "He had worked through the troubles in his life and had finally seemingly reached the point where everything was going to blossom. And he was going to have the future we all wanted for him. It's painful to us. We feel it in our hearts, and we will miss him."

Bengals receiver Andre Caldwell said: "People thought he was a bad guy, but he had a big heart."

Police released few details about the investigation, other than homicide detectives were assigned to the case. Two 911 tapes released Thursday and witnesses provided some clues.

Neighbor Lee Hardy told WLWT-TV and The Cincinnati Enquirer that he was working in his yard when the truck left the driveway. Hardy said Henry was yelling that he needed to talk to the woman behind the wheel.

"He said, 'If you take off, I'm going to jump off the truck and kill myself,'" Hardy told the newspaper.

The first 911 tape was from an unidentified woman who said she was following a yellow pickup truck.

"It's got a black man on it with no shirt on, and he's got his arm in a cast and black pants on," she told a dispatcher. "He's beating on the back of this truck window. ... I don't know if he's trying to break in or something. It just looks crazy. It's a girl driving it."

Just over a minute later, an unidentified man called 911 and said he saw a man "laying in the road" and "definitely unconscious."

AP

In a Tuesday, Sept. 15, 2009 photo, Cincinnati Bengals' Chris Henry, right, is seen with, from left, his fiancé, Loleini Tonga, and their kids DeMarcus, 10 months, Seini, 3, and Chris Jr., 2, at their home.

Colts stay unbeaten with 35-31 win over Jags

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (AP)—Peyton Manning completed every pass early and one big one late, exactly what the Indianapolis Colts needed to stay unbeaten.

Manning threw for 308 yards and four touchdowns, including a 65-yarder to Reggie Wayne to go ahead for good, and the Colts beat the Jacksonville Jaguars 35-31 Thursday night to improve to 14-0 for the first time in franchise history.

The wild game on a cool night included 714 yards, 43 first downs, 10 lead changes, six punts, several big plays and just two turnovers.

"I thought today was a great test against a good team," Manning said. "Feel real good about the win."

The Jaguars (7-7) had a chance to win it in the closing minutes, but David Garrard overthrew Mike Thomas on a third-and-10 play with about a minute to play. Jacob Lacey intercepted the ball, and the Colts ran out the clock.

Indianapolis extended its NFL-record winning streak in the regular season to 23 and became the third 14-0 team in league history, joining the 1972 Miami Dolphins and 2007 New England Patriots. New Orleans can join the list with a victory over the Dallas Cowboys on Saturday night.

Jacksonville lost for the third time in the four games and no longer controls its fate in the AFC wild-card race.

They have Manning to thank for this one.

He completed his first 13 passes and was nearly as efficient as he was in last year's game in Jacksonville, when he completed 17 in a row.

Manning finished 23 of 30, picking apart Jacksonville's secondary early and often. Wayne caught five passes for 132 yards. Dallas Clark had seven receptions for 95 yards and two scores.

The Jaguars, who have lost eight of 10 in the series, got in a shootout with Manning & Co., which turned out to be a huge mistake.

Garrard was 23 of 40 for 223 yards with three touchdowns. Maurice Jones-Drew ran 27 times for 110 yards and a score. But once the Jaguars got behind and abandoned the running game, they had trouble sustaining drives.

All that talk about Indy resting some of its key players turned out to be pretty just speculation. Sure, defensive ends Dwight Freeney and Robert Mathis played sparingly, but Manning, Wayne, Clark and the other stars played the entire game.

And did most of the damage.

The dagger came with 5:23 remaining, when Manning found Wayne streaking down the sideline for the 65-yarder. Safety Reggie Nelson seemed to bite on a pump fake, allowing Wayne to get behind the coverage. It was the biggest play in a second half that didn't quite live up to the opening 30 minutes.

"Reggie just used his speed," Manning said. "What a great job once he caught the ball to get into the end zone."

The first half was a back-and-forth affair that included 336 yards, 57 plays, 38 points, 23 first downs, one penalty, no turnovers and not a single punt. The half took a little more than an hour to play, so fast that the league's broadcast representative spent the final few minutes scrambling to plug in all the TV timeouts.

Manning was perfect, completing 12 of 12 passes for 116 yards and had touchdown passes to Clark and Austin Collie. Clark made a sliding grab in the back of the end zone for a 6-yard score and a 7-3 lead early in the second quarter. Collie's catch, a 23-yarder on a seam route that he briefly bobbled at the goal line, put Indy ahead 21-17 with 35 seconds remaining.

The Jaguars got in field-goal range just before halftime, but Josh Scobee came up well short on a 57-yard attempt.

Jacksonville played a near perfect half on offense. Garrard completed 12 of 16 passes for 97 yards, and one of his best plays of the season resulted in a touchdown.

He faked a handoff, rolled left on a bootleg, then spun around and headed across the field. Maurice Jones-Drew, who had been blocking on the play, released toward the end zone and Garrard lofted a perfect pass for the score.

Jones-Drew, who averaged 69 yards rushing the last four games, ran 14 times for 73 yards in the first half. There had been rumors that 5-foot-7 dynamo was slowed by a sore knee. He looked fully healthy against Indy.

Police spokeswoman Rosalyn Harrington wouldn't say if the woman, whom police would not identify, was present at the scene when police arrived.

Henry and his 25-year-old fiancee Loleini Tonga, who grew up in Charlotte and received a volleyball scholarship to North Carolina A&T, were raising three children. Tonga's MySpace page identifies herself as "Mrs. C. Henry" and featured a post from Tuesday talking about buying wedding rings.

"We are greatly saddened by today's tragic news about the loss of Chris Henry," NFL commissioner Roger Goodell said. "Our thoughts and prayers go out to Chris' family, including his Bengals family."

Bengals coach Marvin Lewis said: "It's a very difficult thing with his loss and a young life and one that won't ever get to reach its full potential."

Police said the domestic dispute began Wednesday at a home about a half-mile away from where Henry was found. He had jumped into the bed of the pickup as his fiancee was driving away from the residence, and at some point when she was driving "came out of the back of the vehicle," authorities said.

Two women who lived nearby said Thursday they saw Tonga and the pickup at the scene when police arrived. Cheryl Hoffman said she came out with a blanket when she saw Henry wasn't wearing a shirt.

"When I got to where he was laying on the ground out there he was very unresponsive, laying flat on the ground," Hoffman said. "He was foaming at the mouth, and I was very worried what was happening then."

When players received word Henry had died, quarterback Carson Palmer called them together in the locker room and said they should dedicate the game and rest of the season to Henry and the wife of defensive coordinator Mike Zimmer, who died unexpectedly during the season.

The Bengals will wear a helmet sticker Sunday against San Diego to remember Henry, and Goodell requested clubs observe a moment of silence before each game.

"He was doing everything right," receiver Chad Ochocinco said.

Henry grew up south of New Orleans in the suburban community of Belle Chasse and soon dreamed of playing in the NFL. But after he was ejected from a game and suspended for another at West Virginia, the Bengals were the only team to bring him in for a pre-draft visit in 2005.

Selected in the third round, Henry played a vital role as a speedy, deep threat as Cincinnati reached the playoffs in his rookie season. But in the final month of the season he was arrested for marijuana possession.

It was the first of five arrests, and Henry and former Tennessee cornerback Adam "Pacman" Jones became known as the league's two most trouble-bound players. Goodell suspended both in 2007—Jones for a full season, Henry for half of it—as part of a toughening of the league's conduct policy.

After Henry was arrested for a fifth time following that season on an assault charge, Municipal Court Judge Bernie Bouchard called Henry "a one-man crime wave." He was released by the Bengals the same day.

But Brown gave him a second chance, re-signing him before the 2008 season.

"I kind of felt like I dug myself out of the hole and started doing the right things," Henry said in an interview with The Associated Press as training camp opened this season. "People say, 'How you feeling now Chris? You doing all right?' I just tell them I'm blessed. That's why I got it."

A thigh injury slowed him early in the season, and he had 12 catches for 236 yards—his 19.7-yard average per catch leads the team—when he broke his left arm during a win over Baltimore, ending his season.

"My grandma always says you never question the man upstairs on decisions he makes," Ochocinco said. "Everyone makes mistakes, but I don't see how Chris was supposed to go already, especially when he was on the right path. Other than that, he's going to be missed."

Wade gets 25, Heat roll past Magic, 104-86

MIAMI (AP)—Dwyane Wade had 25 points and seven assists, Michael Beasley added 22 points and the Miami Heat were in control throughout an easy 104-86 victory over the Eastern Conference champion Orlando Magic on Thursday night.

Dorell Wright and Quentin Richardson each scored 11 points for the Heat, who beat their Southeast Division rivals for the second time in two meetings this season.

Dwight Howard finished with 17 points and 14 rebounds for the Magic, who fell to 15-4 against the East this season. J.J. Redick scored 13 points, Mickael Pietrus added 12 and Vince Carter was scoreless for the game's first 21 minutes before finishing with 10 points for Orlando.

Wade sat out the entire fourth quarter for the third straight game, all of them routs with Miami winning the last two. Since a pair of team meetings following a 28-point home loss to Memphis on Sunday, the Heat are 2-0 with an average winning margin of 19 points.

The Magic have dominated the Sunshine State rivalry in recent years, winning 12 of the last 14 meetings coming into Thursday. The only two Orlando losses in that span were by six points last January, then a single point on Nov. 25.

This one, much different.

Miami hadn't enjoyed a blowout against Orlando since Feb. 15, 2006, 16 series games ago. The Heat won 110-100 that night, a final margin that belied the fact Miami led by as many as 29 in that game.

Unbelievably as it may seem, considering Orlando had won 12 of the last 14 in the series, Miami led by 29 in this one as well.

Sparked by three separate 10-0 runs, the Heat led 89-60 entering the fourth quarter. The first two spurts came in the first quarter, putting Miami up 12-6 and then 33-18.

And the final burst came to close the third, although it may have been costly for Miami.

Wade hit a pullup 3-pointer with 1 minute remaining, putting Miami up 87-60. When Redick tried a layup in transition moments later, Wade lurked behind then pounced to block it off the backboard.

Redick went tumbling, but Wade apparently got the worst of the deal.

Already bothered by a sore right wrist for the past week, Wade started shaking his shooting hand seconds after making that block and asked to be removed from the game.

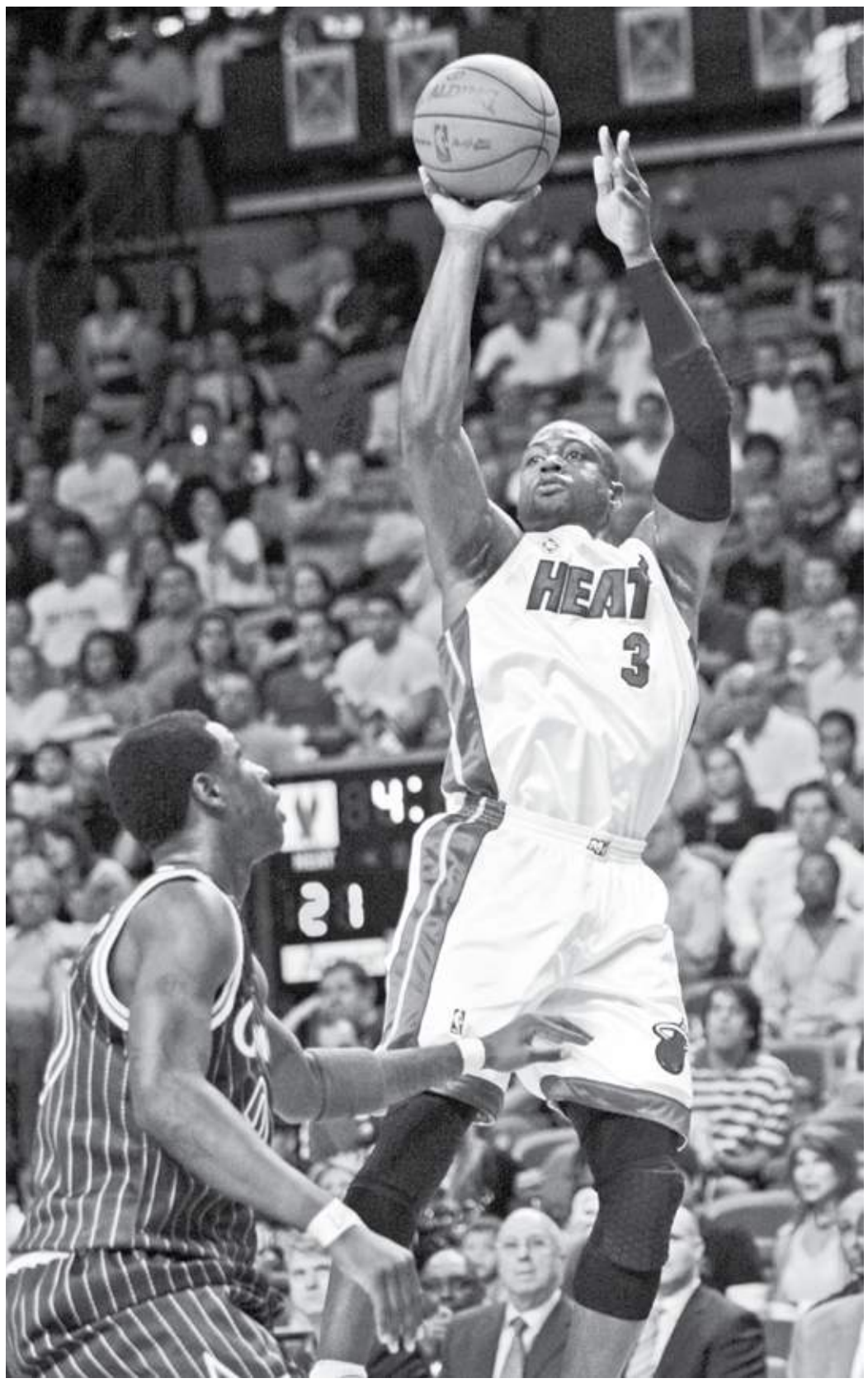
It was about the only downside for Miami all night.

Wright's buzzer-beating jumper to close the first quarter helped Heat reserves outscore Orlando's bench 10-0 in the first 12 minutes. When Mario Chalmers scored with 9:45 left in the half, Miami led 39-21—significant because Orlando hasn't won a game after trailing by more than 17 this season.

Whenever Orlando wanted to make things interesting, Miami had an answer.

Orlando ran off seven straight points to get within 39-28, so Beasley and Chalmers answered with a 7-0 run. And after Jason Williams blew past Carlos Arroyo for a layup with 6 seconds left in the half, Arroyo hit a 3-pointer over him with 0.2 ticks remaining for a 59-44 lead at the break.

Orlando didn't get any closer than that in the third, and Beasley was the only starter from either side to play in the fourth.



Miami Heat guard Dwyane Wade (3) goes up for a shot against Orlando Magic forward Mickael Pietrus during the first quarter of an NBA basketball game Thursday, Dec. 17, 2009, in Miami.
AP

Trail Blazers 105, Suns 102

At Portland, Jerryd Bayless had a career-high 29 points and made three free throws in the final 9 seconds to give the Portland Trail Blazers a comeback win over the Phoenix Suns.

Brandon Roy added 27 points and eight rebounds for the injury plagued Blazers, who trailed by 15 points in the third quarter.

Bayless made 1-of-2 free throws with four seconds left to give Portland a three-point lead. Steve Nash's off-balance 3-point attempt bounced off the rim as time expired.

Amare Stoudemire had 27 points for the Suns, who have lost six straight on the road for the first time since 2003-04.

Bulls 98, Knicks 89

In Chicago, the home team came from 17 points down to beat New York.

Luol Deng scored 24 points and John Salmons added 20 for the Bulls, who took control with a 15-2 run in the fourth quarter. Salmons scored seven points in the final 48 seconds, hitting a key 3-pointer.

The Knicks led by 17 in the first quarter thanks to a torrid start by Al Harrington, who scored 14 of his 18 points in the period. New York attempted an NBA-record 29 3-pointers in the first half, hitting nine. The Knicks finished 16 of 47 from long range, setting an NBA season high for 3-point tries.

Shocked in Seattle: Lee wanted to stay with Phils

SEATTLE (AP)—Cliff Lee thought he was staying in Philadelphia—or the rest of his career.

The Phillies' postseason star proposed a routine counteroffer on a contract extension Wednesday, then headed for the Mississippi River near his Arkansas home to hunt.

He got some stunning news on the drive there.

Phillies general manager Ruben Amaro Jr. called to tell Lee he had been traded to Seattle for three prospects in a four-team deal that brought Roy Halladay to the Phillies. It was the first time that two Cy Young Award winners were dealt on the same day.

Speaking by cell phone Thursday night while beginning a long-planned vacation in Puerto Rico, the 2008 AL Cy Young winner said he was in "disbelief and shock." The 31-year-old left-hander had been excited to rejoin the Phillies for a run at another World Series.

Instead, he's headed to his third team in five months.

"At first, I didn't believe it. I thought we were working out an extension with the Phillies," Lee said. "I thought I'd be spending the rest of my career there. ... I was under the impression they wanted to keep me there for a long time.

"In my mind, it was going to happen."

Lee was the reigning AL Cy Young Award winner when the Phillies got him from Cleveland on July 29. He went 7-4 with a 3.39 ERA down the stretch, then starred in the postseason by going 4-0 with a 1.56 ERA in five starts.

Lee earned both of the Phillies' wins in the World Series against the New York Yankees. He was wowed by what he called an "unbelievable" lineup and excellence from top to bottom in Philadelphia's organization.

While saying he was "disappointed, sure," he said he can't blame the Phillies for preferring Halladay.

"Basically, they had an opportunity to get the best pitcher in baseball," Lee said, realizing the Phillies moved him because they wanted to seize a chance to restock their minor league system. "I can't blame them for choosing Roy Halladay over me."

Lee was deer hunting on his property in Arkansas this week when his wife, Kristen, called him to relay reports he might be traded. He dismissed them as rumors—especially, he said, when he asked the team and "the Phillies kind of downplayed it, made it seem like it wasn't real."

"Then the next morning I found out it was real," he said.

The 2008 All-Star, who entered the major leagues with the Indians in 2002, has one season and $9 million remaining on his contract. Mariners general manager Jack Zduriencik said an extension with Seattle beyond 2010 was not part of the trade negotiations.

Lee said he is "not dead set" on becoming a free agent next winter.

"I'm open to see how it plays out," he said. "I can't give you an answer right now because I don't know what Seattle is all about."

He does know a few things about Seattle:

■ Felix Hernandez is good. Lee will join this year's AL Cy Young Award runner-up atop a rotation that is now the envy of baseball.

"As far as just straight stuff goes, it'd have to be him and CC (Sabathia, a former teammate in Cleveland) neck and neck for the best pitchers I've played with," Lee said.

■ Center fielder Franklin Gutierrez is a former teammate of Lee's with the Indians. The newest Mariner noted he now has a speedy, pitcher-friendly defense that includes Gold Glove right fielder Ichiro Suzuki, recently signed All-Star infielder Chone Figgins and 2004 All-Star shortstop Jack Wilson.

■ Safeco Field is spacious, also pitcher-friendly and a great place to watch a game.

■ The team that won 85 games last season is on the rise.

■ And the city, to Lee, always "seemed like it was on the other side of the world" when he played here as a visitor. He's never been based farther west than his native Arkansas.

Lee has one other link with a Mariner, the most famous one. In 2004 he was suspended six games for throwing behind Ken Griffey Jr.'s head, when baseball's active home run leader was with Cincinnati. One inning earlier, Lee had given up the 499th home run of Griffey's career, and the superstar had paused to watch the ball's flight.

Griffey is coming back for Year Two of his reunion tour with Seattle in 2010.

"I hope he doesn't hold a grudge on me. I'll ask him if he does," Lee said, laughing and saying he's talked in passing with Griffey since and all seemed well.

Same goes for the surging Mariners. And they may not be done adding. They need a left fielder and are discussing whether to pursue a potential trade with the Chicago Cubs for mercurial outfielder Milton Bradley.

"We're not done yet," Zduriencik said.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	20	4	.833	–
Toronto	11	17	.393	11
New York	8	17	.320	12 1/2
Philadelphia	6	19	.240	14 1/2
New Jersey	2	24	.077	19

Southeast Division

Atlanta	18	6	.750	–
Orlando	19	7	.731	–
Miami	13	11	.542	5
Charlotte	10	14	.417	8
Washington	7	16	.304	10 1/2

Central Division

Cleveland	19	7	.731	–
Milwaukee	11	12	.478	6 1/2
Detroit	11	14	.440	7 1/2
Indiana	9	14	.391	8 1/2
Chicago	9	15	.375	9

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

Dallas	19	7	.731	–
San Antonio	13	10	.565	4 1/2
Houston	14	11	.560	4 1/2
New Orleans	11	13	.458	7
Memphis	10	15	.400	8 1/2

Northwest Division

Denver	19	7	.731	–
Utah	15	10	.600	3 1/2
Portland	16	11	.593	3 1/2
Oklahoma City	12	12	.500	6
Minnesota	4	22	.154	15

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	20	4	.833	–
Phoenix	17	9	.654	4
L.A. Clippers	11	13	.458	9
Sacramento	11	13	.458	9
Golden State	7	18	.280	13 1/2

Yesterday's Games
Chicago 98, New York 89
Miami 104, Orlando 86
Portland 105, Phoenix 102

NBA LEADERS

SCORING

	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Anthony, DEN	26	274	226	797	30.7
James, CLE	26	261	186	751	28.9
Bryant, LAL	24	258	154	693	28.9
Durant, OKC	24	224	189	667	27.8
Nowitzki, DAL	26	249	182	700	26.9
Wade, MIA	23	203	187	613	26.7
Ellis, GOL	25	240	116	611	24.4
Granger, IND	17	130	102	414	24.4
Bosh, TOR	28	229	209	673	24.0
Roy, POR	26	193	137	555	21.3
Johnson, ATL	24	198	80	508	21.2
Arenas, WAS	23	168	108	484	21.0
Gay, MEM	24	189	104	502	20.9
Jennings, MIL	23	177	70	475	20.7
Williams, UTA	23	173	94	469	20.4
Boozer, UTA	25	206	96	508	20.3
Evans, SAC	23	171	113	466	20.3
Duncan, SAN	21	170	82	422	20.1
Harrington, NYK	24	171	92	474	19.8
Lopez, NJN	26	188	137	513	19.7

FG PERCENTAGE

	FG	FGA	PCT
Perkins, BOS	113	174	.649
Howard, ORL	146	228	.640
Gasol, MEM	135	218	.619
Hilario, DEN	130	225	.578
Bynum, LAL	147	256	.574
Lee, NYK	176	307	.573
Landry, HOU	153	267	.573
Horford, ATL	133	233	.571
Garnett, BOS	156	274	.569
O'Neal, MIA	118	210	.562

REBOUNDS

	G	OFF	DEF	TOT	AVG
Howard, ORL	25	98	220	318	12.7
Noah, CHI	23	100	179	279	12.1
Wallace, CHA	24	55	234	289	12.0
Bosh, TOR	28	97	220	317	11.3
Camby, LAC	24	72	198	270	11.3
Boozer, UTA	25	51	225	276	11.0
Haywood, WAS	23	106	144	250	10.9
Duncan, SAN	21	64	158	222	10.6
Lee, NYK	24	54	189	243	10.1
Randolph, MEM	25	112	138	250	10.0

ASSISTS

	G	AST	AVG
Nash, PHX	25	280	11.2
Paul, NOR	16	174	10.9
Williams, UTA	23	240	10.4
Rondo, BOS	24	227	9.5
Kidd, DAL	26	237	9.1
James, CLE	26	207	8.0
B. Davis, LAC	24	179	7.5
Arenas, WAS	23	158	6.9
Westbrook, OKC	24	160	6.7
Duhon, NYK	24	150	6.3

NFL STANDINGS

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New England	8	5	0	.615	348	234
Miami	7	6	0	.538	292	306
N.Y. Jets	7	6	0	.538	275	211
Buffalo	5	8	0	.385	215	271
South						
x-Indianapolis	14	0	0	1.000	394	248
Jacksonville	7	7	0	.500	266	322
Tennessee	6	7	0	.462	293	323
Houston	6	7	0	.462	311	273
North						
Cincinnati	9	4	0	.692	264	217
Baltimore	7	6	0	.538	319	218
Pittsburgh	6	7	0	.462	278	244
Cleveland	2	11	0	.154	158	315
West						
San Diego	10	3	0	.769	362	259
Denver	8	5	0	.615	256	230
Oakland	4	9	0	.308	155	316
Kansas City	3	10	0	.231	206	342

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East

Philadelphia	9	4	0	.692	372	273
Dallas	8	5	0	.615	296	233
N.Y. Giants	7	6	0	.538	341	330
Washington	4	9	0	.308	234	251
South						
x-New Orleans	13	0	0	1.000	466	274
Atlanta	6	7	0	.462	302	305
Carolina	5	8	0	.385	225	282
Tampa Bay	1	12	0	.077	190	356
North						
y-Minnesota	11	2	0	.846	389	243
Green Bay	9	4	0	.692	344	243
Chicago	5	8	0	.385	247	291
Detroit	2	11	0	.154	209	406
West						
Arizona	8	5	0	.615	306	258
San Francisco	6	7	0	.462	269	242
Seattle	5	8	0	.385	250	301
St. Louis	1	12	0	.077	146	361

x-clinched division
y-clinched playoff spot

Yesterday's Game
Indianapolis 35, Jacksonville 31

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOCAL SCORES

PILCOWA STANDINGS

Open		
Diamond	5	1
Noni Saipan	4	2
Saipan Fresh	3	3
IT&E	3	3
NCIC	0	6
Masters		
Ebisuya	6	1
University of Loyola	5	2
Wushin	2	2
GEC	1	4
Cool Water	1	5

Finchem says PGA will get by without Woods

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Florida (AP)—PGA Tour commissioner Tim Finchem said golf will survive no matter how long Tiger Woods stays away to sort out his personal life, and that a portrait of "gloom and doom" is misleading.

In the midst of a shocking sex scandal, Woods is taking an indefinite leave from competition to try to save his marriage, leaving the sport without its biggest star as it tries to cope with a downturn in the economy.

"I want him to come back and play," Finchem said Thursday in a conference call. "But we are going to be successful in '10. If Tiger is out for a couple of months or eight months of a year, we're going to have a successful year. ... It won't be at the same levels without our No. 1 player, there's no question about that," he said. "No sport would be at the same level without its No. 1 player. But I think the doom and gloom needs to go away."

Finchem said six of the highest-performing tournaments, which he based on net revenue donated to charity, have not had Woods in the field during the last several years. He also said the cumulative number of viewers during a PGA Tour event did not decrease even when Woods missed the second half of 2008 with knee surgery.

"I'm not saying that I think everything is fine," Finchem said. "We're in a down economy. It's hard to sell. And having the No. 1 player in our sport not play is not a positive thing, and it does hurt television ratings. But I look at it in the reverse. I look at Tiger spiking ratings off of a significantly solid base when he plays ... and I want that spike. And I certainly want the attention he brings to the sport."

The attention has shifted dramatically since a Nov. 27 car accident outside his Florida home, setting off sensational details of extramarital affairs that have tarnished sports' biggest star.

Finchem said it was the biggest "curveball" he has dealt with in his 15 years as commissioner.

COACH

From Page 28

Saipan Tribune said his one-year stay in the CNMI and with the Northern Mariana Islands Football Association was a challenge to him as a coach and as a former professional play.

"It was a challenge because I have to help an organization which is just starting to grow. It was also one of the best moments in my coaching career, as I got to meet people/players who are eager to learn and move their playing skills to a higher level," Kambe said.

"I am happy to meet these players, volunteers, coaches, officials who are committed to the program, to the development of football in the CNMI, especially for the youth.

Kambe said when he goes back to Japan to serve as technical director for pro club JEF United, he will bring with him a lot of memories he shared with the CNMI football community.

"One of them was our trip to Taiwan where for the first time our women's team played in an international tournament. Another was the youth festival, the young and enthusiastic players who have grown to be better players. Then there were the various leagues, the men's, women's, school leagues, and so on. It was great to see a lot of people of all ages coming out to play football," Kambe said.

'Mr. Encyclopedia'

NMIFA general secretary Ken Imaya will also keep a lot of memories he shared with Kambe.

"One is his deep knowledge about football. The sport in the CNMI has just started to grow and we parents and volunteers have little knowledge about football so if we have questions, we always go to coach Kambe," Imaya said.

"He always has answers and even shares more what you asked for. For that, I called him Mr. Encyclopedia," Imaya said.

The NMIFA general secretary added he admired Kambe's generosity, saying he never heard the Japanese coach say no to a request.

"If you need him, he is there to help you that's why it was not surprising to learn he is a well-liked person here. He is honest and straightforward, but still easy to go with. We will definitely miss him," Imaya said.

Program continuity

Kambe, who came to Saipan on loan from Japan Football Association, hopes whoever takes over his job as NMIFA coach and technical director will continue what he has started, especially for the youth program.

"I hope JFA will continue to send coaches here for five to 10 years, NMIFA really needs a continuity on its program to realize its goals," Kambe said.

"Rome was not built in one day," Kambe added.

Schultz wishes that the CNMI football community will have someone as hardworking, professional, and accommodating as Kambe.

"We need someone like him, someone who builds a program for the youth and someone who really cares for the development of the sport here," Schultz said.

Kambe will be leaving early this morning and hopes to return to Saipan someday and see the players he helped improve their skills play against Japanese strikers

"I had a lot of happy days on Saipan and I will miss all the people I worked with, from the staff of NMIFA to the volunteers and parents. Without these people, my life here on Saipan will be difficult. I thanked them and wish NMIFA and CNMI football good luck," Kambe said.

EBISUYA

From Page 28

sive rebound for the putback and gave Ebisuya a 79-78 lead.

UoL faltered on its next play, while Opone canned another basket, making a fadeaway jumper that increasing Ebisuya's lead to three, 81-78. UoL made two free throws in the ensuing play to move within one, but Edwin Santos' split made it a two-point game, 82-80.

With 20 seconds left, UoL had a chance to tie the score, but instead of going for a quick two, Loyola opted for a triple and missed. Ebisuya grabbed the rebound and UoL gave up two fouls, sending Opone to the free throw line, with four seconds left in the game. Opone had a split to peg the final tally.

IT&E 106, NCIC 83

In the open division, IT&E snapped its two-game losing skid, whipping New City International Construction, 106-83.

Errol Peredo paced IT&E with 26 points, giving the team its third win in six games. Bonbon Cadagat added 19, while Alex Lauron and Jeff Pagarao chipped in 18 and 10, respectively.

IT&E led by only five in the first quarter, 20-15, but began pulling away in the second period, 51-34, behind Lauron's eight points. Peredo nailed 10 of his total output in the third to widen the gap, 71-57, entering the final canto. He added 10 more points in the final period, while Lauron contributed eight to lift IT&E to a 23-point win.

Masters

Ebisuya 83 – Opone 21, Abedes 18, Moises 17, Santos 13, Casabuena 8, Olivos 6.

UoL 80 – Abuy 17, Cosino 14, Tabora 14, De La Torre 9, Puri 4, Dizon 3.

Scoring by quarters: 17-21, 42-44, 63-60, 83-80.

Open

IT&E 106 – Peredo 26, Cadagat 19, Lauron 18, Pagarao 10, Moises 9, Lansang 8, Johnson 7, Mendiola 5, Tumaquip 4.

NCIC 83 – Galarse 22, Lansang 15, R. Deleon Guerrero 11, Tabora 8, Detera 8, Manangan 7, L. Deleon Guerrero 6, Abenoja.

Scoring by quarters: 20-15, 51-34, 71-57, 106-83.

CHRISTMAS

From Page 28

a runner in the 40-and-above age group.

Entrance fee is $5 per runner or $25 for team, while solo runners need to pay $10. Registration begins at 5am, while the race will kick off at 6am. Prizes will be given to each member of the Top 3 finishers. Solo finishers (men's and women's) will also receive awards.

The Road Rulers topped last year's Christmas Island Relay. The winning team was composed of Champ Untalan, Matt Mancao, Nate Mateo, Robin Sapong, and Yvonne Bennett and it finished the 13.7-mile race in one hour, 30 minutes, 41 seconds. Road Rulers' time surpassed the 1:33:04 recorded by 2007 champion We Are Legends.

Finishing second were the Saipan Cyclers, who timed in at 1:34.38, and were composed of Florence Antonio, Butch Sublemente, Ronald Villafria, Cesar Danao, and Rene Calage.

In third place was Team Docomo (James Lee, Jerry Diaz, Pete Mendiola, Joe Villacrusis, and Yvette Bennett) with a time of 1:42:24.

In the solo division, Ketson "Jack" Kabirel and Noriko Jim ruled the men's and women's events.

Kabiriel crushed the 2008 wining time (1:48.50) after timing in at 1:47:35 and finishing ahead of Keum Bae Ji (1:58:17). Other finishers in the men's solo were Lewie Tenorio (2:03:24), Fred Camacho (2:03:25), Yoshi Suzuki (2:04:38), and Stephen Springer (2:23:05).

Jim clocked in at 1:56:03 to beat Monica Yamaguchi and Tamia Noshikido, who submitted 1:58:17, and 2:10:41, respectively.

Next week's relay race is part of NMA's mission to promote healthy activities in the CNMI.

"The 28th Annual Christmas Island Relay is just one of the many activities and events that NMA hosts in its continued efforts to promote national physical fitness, health and wellness and fight obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and many other medical conditions that plague the people of the CNMI," NMA said in a statement.

PRIZES

From Page 28

(June), Edward Manibusan (July), Peter Rojas (August), Vince Deleon Guerrero (September), Art I. Deleon Guerrero (October), Jayson John (November), and Mariano Fajardo (December). Only nine were present to receive their monthly Ace trophy with Fajardo, Rojas and Dela Cruz missing the event.

These monthly Aces joined other SGA members in the 2009 SGA Ace of the Aces Tournament played at the Kingfisher Golf Links and Coral Ocean Point late last month.

The two-day tournament produced Ace of Aces champion Vince Rosario and five other winners.

Larry Deleon Guerrero won first place after shooting a net 141 for two days and he went home with $200, free membership fee for 2010, and a blender. Second placer Steve Balakrishna (net 147) won $175 and a dinnerware set; third placer Joe I. Sablan (net 147) claimed $125 and a power stick vacuum; fourth placer Frances Sablan (net 151) notched a pressure cooker; and fifth placer and 2008 Ace of Aces champion Demapan (net 152) won an electric skillet.

SGA also gave prizes to longest drive and greeny winners at Kingfisher and COP, and other categories.

Manibusan won the lowest gross (71), while Fajardo topped the lowest net (60) category. Manibusan also had the most birdies (22), Balakrishna made the most greenies (six), and John L. Babauta recorded the most longest drive (five). The most consistent and most improved player awards went to Jung Eung Teack and Larry Deleon Guerrero, respectively.

Meanwhile, SGA would like to thank the following for donating prizes for the banquet: Marianas Country Club, Laolao Bay Golf Resort, COP, Shell, Pacific Islands Club, Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan, Tinian Mayor Ray Dela Cruz, Kingfisher Golf Links, Payless, Thai Yang Restaurant, Amigo, and Edward and Frances Sablan. ***(Roselyn B. Monroyo)***

Bengals' Chris Henry dies day after dispute

Chris Henry was no stranger to trouble.

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Wade gets 25, Heat roll past Magic, 104-86

Dwyane Wade had 25 points and seven assists, Michael Beasley added 22 points and the Miami Heat were in control throughout an easy 104-86 victory over the Eastern Conference champion Orlando Magic on Thursday night.

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Coach Kambe bids CNMI goodbye

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Youth players pay tribute to coach Sugao Kambe during last month's youth football fall festival at the Hopwood Junior High School Field.

The CNMI football community bids farewell to coach Sugao Kambe, who will return to Japan today after a year of sharing his expertise and love for the sport in the Commonwealth.

"I am sad to see him go. He is such a well-loved coach here and the list of kind words to best describe coach Kambe could go on," said CNMI Women's National Team member Brenda Schultz.

"I will always remember coach Kambe as a very kind, friendly and dedicated coach. He has a good sense of humor, always greets us at practice and during games, and even though he is always in a jovial mood, he sees to it that you are doing what you are supposed to do in training and games," Schultz added.

Schultz said she admired Kambe's commitment to the youth and his passion to teach these young players his knowledge in football.

"His programs/teachings are really focused on the youth. He has so much dedication for our children. He always come to watch youth players play and encourage them to show their best game," Schultz said.

Challenge

Kambe, in an interview with

See COACH on Page 27

Road Rulers near the finish line at the Last Command Post in Marpi during last year's Christmas Island Relay.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Christmas Island Relay Dec. 27

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Northern Marianas Athletics has scheduled the 28th Annual Christmas Island Relay on Dec. 28.

The 13.7 mile-long race from the southern parking lot of Pacific Islands Club in San Antonio to the Last Command Post in Marpi is open to a group of five runners or a soloist.

Three runners will cover three miles each, another will run 2.7 miles, while the fifth member will run the remaining two miles. Each team must consist of either one 16-year-old runner or younger, one female runner, or

See CHRISTMAS on Page 27

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Nine of the 12 SGA monthly Ace winners pose for a group photo during the trophy presentation at Charley's Cabaret at the Pacific Islands Club on Tuesday.

Prizes galore at SGA

Trophies, cash, and gifts poured in during the banquet for the 2009 SGA Ace of the Aces on Tuesday at Charley's Cabaret at the Pacific Islands Club.

The banquet, which also doubled as Saipan Golfers Association's Christmas party, featured a trophy presentation to the 12 monthly Aces, namely Tony De Leon Guerrero (January), Joe Rosario (February), Ray Dela Cruz (March), Frank Rosario (April), Joe Demapan (May), Edward Sablan

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Ebisuya zeroes in on pennant

Ebisuya's Jun Abedes drives against University of Loyola's Ed Cosino during their game in the PILCOWA caging on Thursday at the JP Centre Basketball Court.

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Ebisuya virtually clinched the pennant in the masters division of the 2009 PILCOWA Basketball League after outclassing University of Loyola, 83-80, on Thursday at the JP Centre Basketball Court.

William Opone scored a game-high 21 points, including back-to-back baskets in the second half to lift Ebisuya to the three-point win. The victory improved Ebisuya's record to 6-1, a win ahead of UoL, which dropped to a 5-2 mark. Ebisuya and UoL have one game each left in the regular season. If Ebisuya loses and UoL wins, the former will still get the pennant as it defeated the latter twice this season.

Ebisuya escaped with a win despite trailing by nine, 65-74, at the 5:10 mark of the fourth canto. Fatigue caught up with Ebisuya in the first five minutes of the fourth period, allowing UoL to launch a 12-0 run. Abuy nailed three layups in that rally, capitalizing on Opone's failure to return on defense.

A puffing Opone took a breather for a few minutes and came to Ebisuya's rescue when he reported back in the last three minutes of the game.

UoL had the lead for the last time at 78-77, after Jun Tabora's baseline jumper. Opone then anchored a fastbreak play, missed a layup, but collared the offen-

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